

# COLLEGE HANDBOOK

- ▶ GETTING STARTED
- ▶ MAKING CHOICES
- ▶ COMPLETING APPLICATIONS
- ▶ TESTING
- ▶ FINANCIAL AID
- ▶ RESOURCES
- ... AND MORE





**T**he Maret College Counseling Office is excited to embark upon the college search and application process with you and your family. We recognize that this is an important time for you. For students, this is a period of self-discovery, reflection, and thinking about who they are and who they want to be. For families, this is a major transition, as the student leaves home, perhaps for the first time, to pursue new adventures in a new setting. This handbook contains advice, important information, and activities for you to complete as you go through the college search, application, and admissions processes. Examine it carefully, as there are sections on just about every aspect of this journey.

Through honest self-reflection, students are able to identify institutions that will meet their needs and interest. We are eager to partner with our students and their families and offer advice based on our collective experience; *however, it is important for students to acknowledge that, ultimately, they are in control of this process.* Remember, this process is about the student. Thus, open communication between counselors, parents/guardians, and students is of the utmost importance. We hope for open, honest dialogue throughout the process. In maintaining this communication, we encourage both students and parents/guardians to keep an open mind—do not dismiss a college or idea simply because you have not heard of it. Rather, consider all options and be an informed consumer of information about colleges, universities, and other post-secondary opportunities.

Maret is a member of the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), a member-directed organization of college counseling and admissions professionals that is committed to maintaining high ethical standards among those involved in the college search and admissions process, as well as in the transition to college. As members, we are bound to counsel and represent our students honestly and accurately. We take our roles seriously and always put our students' best interests before anything else. This process is a chance for students to explore, engage, and learn. We are honored to be a part of the journey.

Sincerely,

*The Maret College Counseling Office*

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**E**ach family’s dynamic is different, and how you negotiate this process is, in part, based on the relationships you have developed with your child. This is a process that prepares students for independence, but it can be challenging for everyone involved. It is good that parents/guardians and students work together, but be aware that what students want changes, and often. A family conversation clarifying roles and expectations in the process is a good starting point.

Knowing when to help and when to back off can be difficult for some parents and guardians, but this is only natural, as we know they only want the best for their students. Middlebury College created a list of 10 suggestions for parents and guardians, some of which note symptoms of over-involvement:

1. **Remember that this process is not about you.** Children need to make their own observations and decisions.
2. **Support and encouragement are more appropriate than pressure and unsolicited advice.**
3. **Do not use the words “we” or “our” when referring to your child’s application process.**
4. **Help them prepare, but let them perform.** For example, during a college visit, step back and let your child drive the experience. This is good practice for the next phase of his or her life.
5. **Encourage your child to make his or her own college appointments, phone calls, and emails.** When a family arrives at an admissions office, it is important that the student approach the front desk, not the adults. Having control over the details gives children a sense of ownership—they will learn to appreciate all the steps it takes to make big things happen if *they* do them.
6. **Allow your child to ask the questions.** Children have their own set of issues that are important to them.
7. **Prepare your child for disappointment.** For many students, this is the first time they could face bad news. Remind them that they will be happy at many schools and that admissions decisions do not reflect their worth as people or your worth as parents.
8. **Never complete any portion of the college application for your child.** Many colleges view this as a violation of their honor policy.
9. **Do not let stereotypes or outdated information you have steer your child away from schools in which s/he might otherwise have an interest.** Times have changed and so have colleges—your perspective on a particular school may not be accurate.

**ASKING YOUR STUDENT how they want you to be involved is a good starting point.**

## JUNIOR YEAR

### BEGIN COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS: QUESTION, EXPLORE, INVESTIGATE.

#### OCTOBER

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Attend college fairs and local information sessions.

#### NOVEMBER

- Keep your grades up. Make adjustments if your progress reports are not up to par.
- Attend Junior Parent’s College Night at Maret (parents/guardians).

#### DECEMBER

- Receive results of PSAT/NMSQT.
- Review your scores and consult with college counselors or your advisor to determine how you might improve. This is excellent preparation for the SAT or ACT.
- Begin to think about colleges that you’d like to explore.
- Register for February or April ACT if appropriate and be sure to have the scores sent to Maret.
- Begin researching summer academic experiences, volunteer work, employment, etc.

#### JANUARY

- Attend College Counseling Evening with Deans & Directors at Maret (families).
- Complete the Rising Senior Personal Inventory.
- Encourage your parents to complete their Parent Questionnaire.
- Review SAT and ACT test dates, consider which tests to take when, and register.

#### FEBRUARY

- Schedule an individual college conference.
- Attend the Junior Families Capital Case Studies program.
- Register for the March SAT, if appropriate.
- Register for the April or June ACT and/or the May or June SAT Reasoning Test, if appropriate.

#### MARCH

- Begin developing your “long list” of college choices and contacting them to request information.
- If possible, visit colleges during spring break.

#### APRIL

- Select senior year courses and be sure to continue to challenge yourself.
- Attend area college fairs to get more information on possibilities.

#### MAY

- Take appropriate Advanced Placement exams. Ask your counselors and teachers about this.
- Decide which teachers to ask to write your recommendation letters.
- Submit the Teacher Recommendation Request Form to the teachers you have asked to write recommendation letters for you in person, and enter that information on Naviance.

#### JUNE

- Attend College Application Workshop at Maret.
- Continue researching colleges and requesting information.
- Plan summer and/or fall college visits.

#### JULY/AUGUST

- Continue refining college list.
- Keep up with required and recommended summer reading.
- Begin compiling a reading list of all books read in high school; your college may request one.
- Begin working on a draft of a college essay or personal statement.
- Register with NCAA Eligibility Center, if appropriate (*available July 1*).
- Begin scholarship search.

## SENIOR YEAR

### APPLY, DECIDE, AND FINISH HIGH SCHOOL WITH PRIDE IN YOURSELF.

#### AUGUST

- Access and rollover your Common Application, if appropriate. (*Available August 1*)

#### SEPTEMBER

- Review your transcript with your college counselor to ensure it is accurate.
- Meet with your college counselor to review your list of colleges.
- If applying for Financial Aid, check to see if any of your schools require the College Scholarship Service Profile and complete it before the respective deadlines; request an FSA ID in order to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Meet with college representatives that visit Maret.
- Attend regional college fairs, receptions, and college nights, etc.

#### OCTOBER

- Narrow your College Application List and update your list on Naviance
- If you are thinking about applying Early Decision/Early Action, schedule an appointment with your college counselor.
- Narrow your College Application List to four–eight schools and update your list on Naviance
- Begin preparing backup applications. (*ED/EA applicants*)
- Complete the FAFSA

#### NOVEMBER

- Continue completing applications.
- Submit all completed applications to your college counselor at least two weeks before the due date for review.
- Make sure first quarter grades are strong. If not, work to get semester grades up.

- Write thank-you notes to teachers, coaches, etc., who wrote recommendations for you.

#### DECEMBER

- Submit all remaining applications for initial review to the College Counseling Office.

#### JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL

- Continue scholarship search and complete applications.
- Plan campus visits for colleges you haven’t seen or would like to see again.
- Relax and wait for decisions.

#### BEFORE MAY 1

- Decide on the one college that you will attend. Send in your tuition deposit. Inform the other colleges that accepted you that you have selected another college. Please do not double-deposit.

#### MAY

- Take Advanced Placement Exams.

#### JUNE

- **Congratulations!** Shop for college, read for pleasure, enjoy your summer, and get ready for a great experience! *You will be missed!*

## WHERE TO BEGIN

### TO BEGIN THE COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Why are you going to college?
- What do you expect from a college community?
- What are your areas of academic interest?
- What atmosphere will be best for the way you learn? Do you thrive on competition, or are you more comfortable learning in a more collaborative atmosphere?
- Are you really going to college because your parents expect it or because you cannot conceive of an alternative?

Thinking about these questions will help you select a school that will best fit your needs. Colleges will ask similar questions in essays on your applications or during admissions interviews.

### SECOND, THINK ABOUT THE TYPE OF COLLEGE YOU WANT TO ATTEND.

There are over 2,000 accredited colleges in the United States, each different. Some Maret students even look abroad. You should consider the following factors:

- **Size:** small (2,500 or under), medium (2,500 to 8,000), or large (over 8,000)
- **Location:** urban, a suburb near a city, a college town, or a rural area
- **Area of the country:** the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, or West Coast
- **Academic programs:** liberal arts and sciences, engineering, architecture, nursing, business and accounting, fine or performing arts, and technical arts

- Faculty involvement, research opportunities, class size, diversity of the student population, and subjective factors like campus architecture and aesthetics

You might also consider whether a school is coeducational or has a religious affiliation, its cost and the availability of financial aid, and whether the school caters more to undergraduate or graduate students. *Do your best to separate facts*—that is, what you know to be true about the colleges you are exploring—from *hearsay, rankings, and promotional materials*. At the end of the day, YOU are going to be attending the college you choose, so make sure you have done your homework about the schools to which you are applying and that you are confident you would be happy at any of them.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN THE COLLEGE SEARCH

Each student is unique, and thus each student's college search should be unique. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Each student has different interests, talents, goals, and dreams they hope to pursue and cultivate. Below are some questions to help you think about each college you may be considering beyond reputation and prestige. Before you begin to question colleges, however, it is important to question yourself. *Why are you going to college? How do you learn best? Who are you now, and who do you hope to be as a result of your college experience?*

Remember: it is what you do in your four years of college and how you grow there that truly matter most.

- What types of students are happiest at this college? Are they collaborative? Competitive? Politically active? Athletic? Outdoorsy? From far away or closer to the school?
- Who is most successful academically at this college?
- Is the student body racially, culturally, politically, socially, and economically diverse? If so, how important is this to me? If the student body is not diverse, why? How will diversity play a role in my

intellectual, social, and personal growth? How open are conversations about race and equity? About gender and sexuality? Do students from seemingly different backgrounds interact with one another organically, or do students appear to stick with those who seem like themselves?

- How diverse is the faculty? Are there women and individuals of color in important faculty and administrative positions? If not, what does this say about the academic culture of the institution? Are affinity groups and organizations active on the campus?
- How large are the majority of classes at this school? Are most under 25? Over 100? What sort of classroom environment would be ideal for me as a learner? What kind of academic support can I expect if I encounter challenges?
- Is the curriculum structured so that I will be required to take classes from a broad range of disciplines? If so, what are the requirements and do I like them?
- If the curriculum is open, with little or no core requirements, who is there to advise me and help me think hard about the academic choices I am making?
- Can I be undecided about what I want to study when I apply?
- What percentage of students graduate in four years?
- Are classes taught primarily by full-time faculty members, adjunct faculty, or graduate students?
- How engaged do professors appear to be in their students' lives outside the classroom?
- Can I do research with faculty members or on my own at this college? How are such projects funded?
- Who is visiting the campus to speak, perform, exhibit, or recruit?

- What do students on this campus consider fun?
- How extensive are career services at this school? Do most graduates get jobs shortly after graduation? How many students go on to graduate or attend professional schools after graduation? What industries and professions do graduates seem attracted to?
- Do many students receive financial aid at this school? If not, is it apparent?
- Are fraternities and sororities popular on campus? Will my social life be dependent on Greek life? Are the fraternities and/or sororities focused more on social activities or engaged in service? Is the Greek system residential?
- What percentage of students study abroad? Is doing so easy for all majors?
- How's the food? Is housing guaranteed? Comfortable?

## HOW COLLEGES MAKE THEIR DECISIONS

No one can predict with 100% certainty what admissions decision they will receive from each college or university; therefore, the Maret college counseling team works closely with each student to ensure that they build a college list that is 1) manageable, and 2) represents a range of admissibility. Today, colleges often receive applications from many, many more academically qualified candidates than they can accept.

Statistically, in a recent class nationwide, there were roughly 150,000 students in the top 10% of their high school classes, with roughly 18,000 valedictorians. Together, the fifty most selective colleges in the country have room for fewer than 55,000 students in any given year. At several of the most popular colleges, applications outnumbered places in the freshman class by over 13-to-1. Therefore, by practical necessity, students must think of not only which school is their top choice, but also which others of several colleges and universities they would be happy to attend. *Again, DO NOT BELIEVE that only one college exists where you will be happy and thrive.* Many colleges will give you the opportunities you want and need to succeed in life.

There are many factors that colleges consider when selecting a freshman class. Academically, they want to make certain that, based on past achievement and demonstrated potential, an applicant will be able to achieve academic success at their school. They are also looking for individuals who will be engaged in the

**REMEMBER: There are plenty of colleges out there.** Do not believe that only one college or only a handful of colleges exists where you will be happy and thrive. Many colleges will give you the opportunities you want and need to succeed, *so explore!*

college's campus community outside the classroom.

Most colleges also understand that students learn a lot from each other and each other's life experiences, and thus seek to enroll students from a wide array of ethnic, cultural, racial, geographic, and economic backgrounds. While colleges may differ considerably in who they are looking for in any given year, we are certain that the following list of factors will help you understand what is most critical in the eyes of an admissions officer.

### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OVER THE FOUR YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL

*This is, without a doubt, the most important part of any student's application for admission.* It includes your grades/grade point average, rigor/strength of academic program, breadth of curriculum, and academic standing at Maret relative to your peers. Colleges are interested to see that students have challenged themselves by taking a full range of academic courses each year of high school. Although improved grades during the first half of the senior year are helpful, they do not erase a poor record for the first three years. Colleges also consider a student's standing relative to their Maret peers. While Maret does not officially rank students, admissions officers know Maret well and are able to distinguish students from one another, academically speaking, based on past experience. The fact that you attend Maret lets colleges know you are well-prepared, but it does not guarantee you a place at the college of your choice.

### SCORES FROM STANDARDIZED TESTING

Students must submit scores from either the SAT or ACT to most American colleges and universities as part of their application. Many of the most selective colleges and universities also require students to submit scores from two SAT Subject Tests. These tests are typically taken in the latter half of the junior year and in the senior year.

## WHEN CONSIDERING A COLLEGE, be honest with

**yourself** about your academic achievements, work ethic, love of learning, and willingness to push yourself, and the likelihood that you may (or may not) be competitive, academically speaking, in their applicant pool.

Colleges consider the highest scores a student has achieved when considering their application for admission. Test dates and registration deadlines are always available online through each testing organization's website or in the College Counseling Office. A more detailed explanation of each test is available further in this handbook. In addition, some students who have taken Advanced Placement Exams (APs) may submit their scores for consideration in the admissions process, although no college or university requires them as part of their admissions process.

### TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Most colleges require at least one letter of recommendation from a teacher who has taught you in a core academic course (mathematics, social studies, English, lab science, or world languages). Many schools now require two teacher recommendations, but regardless of the number required, it is important for students to speak with their college counselor about whom they are considering asking to write on their behalf. Colleges rely on your classroom teachers for frank, honest assessments of who you are as a student in their discipline. They are looking for evidence of intellectual curiosity, creativity, engagement, commitment, and respect. So it is up to you to decide who can best present your strengths as a student. Some schools may require letters of recommendation from teachers of specific disciplines (for example, many engineering schools/programs require a letter from an advanced mathematics teacher and a lab science teacher), and prefer that letters come from teachers who have taught you in tenth through twelfth grades. Many schools accept supplemental letters of recommendation from people who know you outside of school, but they will not substitute for a required academic teacher letter of recommendation from Maret. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** to remember that many teachers at Maret are writing for multiple students, so giving your teachers ample time to write on your behalf is not only appreciated, but also critical. In addition, keep in mind that your best teacher recommendation may come from a teacher of a class in which you did not necessarily achieve your highest grade: many times, who you are as a student in a class is just as important (if not more important) than the grade you received. Most important, *less is more*. Submitting several letters that provide similar information about you will not enhance your application.

### SCHOOL/COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION

This letter of recommendation addresses your intellectual and personal character, as well as your activities at and contributions to Maret and other communities. It also provides any additional information we feel is important to share about you as an individual. To prepare, your counselor reviews all of the teacher and advisor comments from your time in the Upper School; they also share their own observations of you, as well as those of coaches,

teachers, and, sometimes, fellow students or your parents. These recommendations are confidential, but they are reviewed by Head of School Marjo Talbott and all of the college counselors before being submitted. We find that providing and receiving constructive feedback about each of our letters is helpful to us as recommendation writers and, more important, to our students. The School/Counselor Recommendation, in a sense, codifies many of the different parts of your application, and so we work extremely hard to craft letters for each student that are original (like you!), detailed, and honest. To help us write the school recommendation, students **MUST** complete and return the personal inventory to their college counselor no later than the last day of school their junior year. The personal inventory will be available in spring of your junior year.

### ESSAYS YOU WRITE FOR YOUR ADMISSIONS APPLICATION

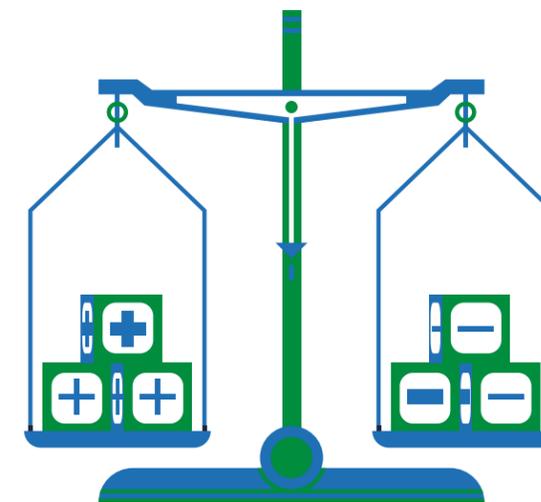
The main essay of your application is the most personal part of your application, as it provides you an opportunity to share something that is important to you and explain why it is important to you. Admissions officers will use it to determine not only how well you write, but also how you think. Before you write your essay, it is important to consider what matters to you as a person. Try to discuss what is less evident from other parts of your application in your essay so that admissions officers see a new side of you. What you write here can help them understand who you are as a person, what you value, and who you might be on their campus as a student, roommate, and community member. The essay is also a place to share a little bit about your personality—if you are a funny person, it is okay to write with a humorous tone; if you are not funny, this isn't the place to try to be. *What is most important about the essay is that it is authentically you.* It is great to have your college counselor, parents, English teacher, or even friends offer feedback and advice about your essay, but make sure that your final draft reads like you. Particular schools may also require supplemental essays—these are also very important, so do not to neglect them.

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The emphasis here is on your level of engagement and impact in the activities you choose, not simply the quantity of your involvements or titles held. Genuine contributions to an activity, team, or organization (in or out of school) matter to colleges, although they will not make up for a mediocre academic record.

### SPECIAL STATUS

Students who are connected to particular priorities of a college may be given extra consideration in the admissions process. For example, sons and daughters of alumni,



recruited athletes, talented artists, actors, scientists, musicians, students who are the first generation of their family to go to college, or members of ethnic groups under-represented on campus may be given additional consideration by a particular school, depending on its priorities in any given year.

This status does not make up for a mediocre academic record, but it can help a student stand out a bit more.

### PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

The importance of an interview varies considerably from school to school. However, we strongly recommend an interview whenever possible. Please see the section on interviews for more details.

### DEMONSTRATED INTEREST

As more and more students apply to more and more colleges, it has become more difficult for schools to predict their yield (that is, the percentage of accepted students who will matriculate). Thus, in an effort to more accurately predict yield, some colleges and universities consider an applicants' interest in them when making admissions decisions. One can demonstrate interest by meeting with college representative when they visit Maret or the DC area, visiting a school's campus, interviewing, applying Early Decision or Early Action, responding or reading through emails a school may send you, or corresponding with an admissions officer. The "why us" essay is also an important way colleges determine your level of interest. The extent to which this interest matters varies from school to school, but thoughtfully and respectfully demonstrating your interest in a college can only help in the admissions process.

## COLLEGE APPLICATION OPTIONS

**E**ach college has its own application procedure. All acceptances are conditional upon the “successful completion of your senior year.” It is important to know that “successful” is defined by each individual college, not by you or Maret. Most colleges have a Regular Decision application option and an early option.

### 1. EARLY DECISION APPLICATION

This type of application is offered by many schools. A student may choose to apply to *only ONE* school Early Decision (ED). The application deadline is earlier than Regular Decision (RD), usually November 1 or 15, although some schools use a second Early Decision (ED II) round with an application deadline around January 1. Under an ED plan, the student **MUST** sign an agreement stating that, if admitted, they will enroll at that school; they also **MUST** agree to withdraw all other applications upon notification of their ED acceptance. Schools may *accept or deny* your application; alternatively, they may defer making a final decision on your application, meaning they will consider your application again in the RD round. Again, if you apply ED to a school and are admitted, you are committed to enroll at that school; you and your college counselor have an obligation to notify any other schools to which you have applied that you have been accepted elsewhere under an ED agreement. The advantage of ED is that if you get in, the college process is over for you, and you are letting the school know you love it.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE that if financial considerations are a large determining factor in your college choice, ED may not be for you since you will not be able to compare financial aid packages from other schools. Because most ED decisions are released in mid-

December (only a few weeks prior to most RD deadlines), *we insist you have other applications ready to go, just in case you are not admitted early.* It can also be difficult psychologically to be turned down by your first-choice school, especially early on in the process, since a negative decision may not be immediately offset by positive ones until later in RD.

A FINAL WORD ON EARLY DECISION: many students and parents believe that applying ED to a selective school may increase the student’s chances of being admitted. While admission rates tend to be higher in the ED round, this **DOES NOT** mean that the chances of admission to a particular institution for any given student applying to that school are higher. Here are some words of wisdom from Columbia University’s Admissions FAQ:

*Although a larger percentage of the Early Decision applicant pool is admitted than the Regular Decision pool, that higher acceptance rate reflects the remarkable strength of a self-selected group of applicants. A candidate to whom we otherwise would not offer admission is not going to be accepted because he or she applied under the Early Decision program.*

### 2. EARLY ACTION APPLICATION

This option is offered by many schools, too, and has a deadline similar to ED, but it differs from ED in that there is **NO** commitment on the part of the student to attend, if admitted. Usually, you may apply to multiple schools that offer Early Action (EA), but some schools will only allow a student to apply to one school (theirs) under this option—this type of EA plan is known as Single Choice Early Action (SCEA) or Restrictive Early Action (REA). The decisions a student can receive under EA are the same as in ED (admit, deny, defer). However, if admitted to a school under any EA plan, a student may still apply to other colleges under RD. There are several advantages to applying EA: oftentimes, the college feels you are more interested or committed to going there if you apply EA; you can apply EA to a school and get an earlier decision from them, which may ease the stress of applying to many more colleges moving forward into the RD round; you may apply to multiple schools EA (as long as none of them use SCEA/REA); and you can compare financial aid offers.

### 3. ROLLING ADMISSIONS APPLICATION

A rolling admissions application option is most commonly found at larger, public colleges and universities, and some smaller colleges. Applications at rolling schools are considered in groups based on the dates they are completed. In other words, once an application and all required credentials are received, a decision will be made on the application, usually within 4–6 weeks. In general, **IT IS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE TO APPLY AS EARLY AS YOU CAN TO THESE SCHOOLS** because the later one applies, the fewer spots remain in the admitted class. It is also advantageous to apply earlier to rolling schools because you are notified earlier, which may ease some of the stress that can come later in applying to many schools during the RD round.

### 4. REGULAR DECISION APPLICATION

The majority of applicants to any particular selective college or university use the Regular Decision application. Deadlines are relatively standard (usually January 1 or 15), as are the notification dates (April 1 or just prior). Offers of need-based financial aid are typically mailed/posted electronically along with the offer of admission. Some schools offer only an RD option but have deadlines earlier in the fall (usually in November); these include any public colleges or universities in California and Florida.

## CONTENTS OF A COMPLETED COLLEGE APPLICATION

- Your application**, including your essay/personal statement and any additional short answer or essay responses to college-specific questions.
- Secondary School Report (SSR) and Counselor Recommendation**, which includes the SSR form, your transcript, the Maret curricular and school profile, and your counselor’s letter of recommendation. The SSR is confidential, though we strive to always put our most positive impressions of our students forward. If you are not applying to a school electronically, you **MUST** let your counselor know and provide them with any necessary forms.
- Supporting or Supplementary Materials**, such as your best analytical paper, photographs, a portfolio or a creative piece, an interview, or athletic tape, as may be required or invited by a school.
- Teacher Recommendations**, which are sent by the

College Counseling Office to ensure confidentiality. If you are not applying to a school electronically, you **MUST** provide your teachers with stamped envelopes, addressed to each college or university.

- Standardized Testing Results**, sent by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) or the ACT. It is your responsibility to request that these scores be sent by the testing agency in order for a college to consider them official. **Maret DOES NOT SEND YOUR SAT, SAT II, OR ACT SCORES FOR YOU.** Be sure to allow enough time for scores to reach the colleges by the application deadline. Note that there are fees for sending your scores, which can add up depending upon the number of schools to which you are sending them and when you request they be sent.
- Midyear Report (MYR)**, which consists of your transcript, updated with midyear grades from your senior year, as well as any pertinent updates that may be needed (e.g., disciplinary information for incidences that occur in the senior year, serious illness, etc.). Like the SSR, the MYR is confidential. Again, if you are not applying to a school electronically, you **MUST** let your counselor know and provide him or her with any necessary forms.
- Application Fee**, which is usually payable online, and must be received in order for a school to process and review your application. Colleges do not charge a fee to make money, but rather to pay for the technology needed to process the thousands of applications they receive. Some schools do not charge a fee to apply if you do so electronically or if you use a special application type, so ask your counselor if they know of any free or reduced-fee applications for a specific school to which you want to apply. Application fees usually range from \$35 to \$80 and can add up—another reason to be thoughtful about where you are applying. If these fees create a hardship for your family, please let your counselor know so that we can request fee waivers for you.

## APPLICATION ESSAYS AND PERSONAL STATEMENTS

In the fall of their senior year, Maret students spend countless hours brainstorming, outlining, writing, editing, and polishing their application essays and personal statements with their college counselors. The essays are an opportunity for the applicant to go beyond the objective numbers and information (curriculum, grades, test scores) and help admissions officers understand what is important to her or him. Doing so gives insight into the applicant’s personality, character, perspectives, and values. The essay

## From the JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY undergraduate admission website:

“Essays that worked” are distinct and unique to the individual writer; however, each of them assisted the admissions reader in learning more about the student beyond the transcripts and activity sheets. The most important thing to remember is to be original and creative as you share your own story with us.”

is where students can stand out from the pack, so it should be tackled thoughtfully, authentically, and with time to rework and edit.

While there is no magic topic or subject you can or should discuss, it is important to keep in mind that you have a relatively short amount of space (under 650 words) to make your point. Thus, as a writer you must get in, make your point, and get out. Some students find word limits challenging, but you do not have an alternative. Therefore, choosing something to write about that you know well and that captures what is important to you is critical.

### WHEN BRAINSTORMING ABOUT THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO CONVEY TO AN ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE, THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

1. What do you truly care about in life? What do you value about the people in your life and the experiences you have had?
2. Why do you truly care about these people and experiences?
3. What concrete details can you discuss to convey what matters to you and why?
4. Does your topic and how you plan to discuss it reveal something unique about you?

As with any essay, you should have a plan or outline before you write. Be intentional about how you lay out your work and thoughts. While not an academic piece, your essay should show off your writing skills.

### HERE ARE SOME OTHER POINTERS:

1. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO WRITE.** You will likely need to write several drafts for each essay, personal statement, or short answer response each application requires. So plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time for multiple drafts. In fact, you can get started with your college counselor in August, before the school year begins in earnest.
2. **Make sure the essay is your story, in your voice.** While it is fine to have your college counselor, an English teacher, or your parents take a look at your essays and provide feedback or advice, your pieces should sound like you—a high school senior. In other words, make sure that the essays are your work, not someone else’s work. Your written voice should represent your personality: if you are a funny person, chances are your essay will be funny; if you are an extremely intellectual person, your pieces may take that tone. Let your personality shine through, and don’t try to make the essay anything else.
3. **Do not write about something or in a way that you think the colleges want.** Admissions officers are very smart folks—they know when your writing is not yours, and they know when you are not being authentic. Again, write about what matters to you and why, not about what you think they want to hear.
4. Though the colleges you apply to may have similarities, **make sure that the supplement for each school is unique.** Every school has something unique about it. Know what it is.
5. **Answer the question being asked.** You can be as creative as you want to be in your essays and talk about whatever you want to talk about, but make sure your response replies to the essay prompt’s question.
6. **START EARLY.** Yes, we said this already, but we want to make sure you remember it.
7. **Pay attention to word or character limits.** Most often your essay and supplements must fit into a text box that will not allow you to go over the maximum allowed.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC RECORD

### UNDOUBTEDLY, THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY COLLEGE APPLICATION IS THE ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT.

Each student at Maret has a transcript (a sample is below), which contains the name of each course taken each year of high school; the number of credits earned for each class; and the grade earned in each class. The Maret transcript also includes a cumulative Maret grade point average (GPA), which represents the student’s grade average over the course of their high school years. *This Maret GPA only includes coursework completed at Maret and includes every course taken for a grade at Maret.*

It is important to note that admissions officers typically do not compare students to each other if they are attending dissimilar high schools. Since high schools vary greatly in terms of rigor, opportunities, and curricula, students are first looked at within the context of their own high school. This GPA is *unweighted*, meaning that

students do not earn extra GPA points by taking an advanced or accelerated course.

If you are curious about how to calculate your cumulative Maret GPA, we have included a guide below based on our grading system. We share this formula with admissions officers so that they understand how we calculated your Maret GPA. Each course taken has a credit value: most yearlong academic and art classes are worth one credit; some, however, are worth half of one credit. To calculate your Maret GPA, multiply the credit value of a course by the GPA points assigned to your letter grade in that course. Then, add up all the points and divide the sum by the total number of credits. This will give you your cumulative Maret GPA.

### GPA GRADE EQUIVALENTS (QUALITY POINTS)

A = 4.00	A- = 3.67	B+ = 3.33
B = 3.00	B- = 2.67	C+ = 2.33
C = 2.00	C- = 1.67	D+ = 1.33
D = 1.00	D- = 0.67	F = 0.00

ACADEMIC RECORD

### ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT SAMPLE

Tadpole, Frog  
3000 Cathedral Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20008

Parents/Guardians: Mr. & Ms. MaretFrog

Date of Birth: 9/18/1999

#### Grade 12: 2017-2018

Subjects:	Grade	Credits
World Literature	A-	1.00
Civil Liberties	A-	1.00
Calculus	B	1.00
Advanced Physics (AB)	A-	1.00
Survey of Hispanic Literature	A	1.00
Concert Choir	P	0.00

#### Grade 10: 2015-2016

Subjects:	Grade	Credits
English 10	A-	1.00
US History	A-	1.00
Algebra 2 & Trigonometry	A-	1.00
Chem Study	B	1.00
Spanish 3	A-	1.00
Concert Choir	A	1.00
Physical Education	P	0.00

**MARET**

“...RE VIVERE” “...HAR” IS TO I Vt

CEEBCode: 090115  
Accredited by the Association of Independent Maryland & D.C. Schools  
Passing Grade: D-

#### Grade 11: 2016-2017

Subjects:	Grade	Credits
Style & Literature	A-	1.00
Globalization and the Modern World	A-	1.00
Advanced Precalculus	B-	1.00
Advanced Biology	B+	1.00
Spanish 4	A-	1.00
Advanced Clay	A-	1.00
Physical Education	P	0.00

#### Grade 9: 2014-2015

Subjects:	Grade	Credits
Elements of Literature	B+	1.00
Shaping of the Modern World	B+	1.00
Geometry	B+	1.00
Biology	B	1.00
Spanish 2	A-	1.00
Clay Core	A-	0.50
Woodley Singers	A	0.50
Physical Education	P	0.00

Cumulative GPA: 3.49

**M**ost colleges and universities require applicants to submit results from standardized testing as part of the admissions process. Following are the types of standardized tests typically taken in high school. However, there are a growing number of schools that no longer require standardized testing as part of their admissions process. A list of these schools can be found on the National Center for Fair and Open Testing's website, [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org).

**PSAT (PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST)**

The PSAT is administered in the tenth and eleventh grades and simulates the multiple-choice sections of the SAT (described below). The PSAT consists of four timed, multiple-choice sections that test students' critical thinking skills and knowledge in three different areas: reading, math, and writing and language. Students receive two overall scores (one for math and one for evidence-based reading and writing), as well as a percentile rank that compares them to others in their grade level nationally. The two scores are added together to give a student a Selectivity Index, which is used by the eleventh grade administration to enter the student in the National Merit Scholarship competition. *Scores from the PSAT are NOT reported to colleges.* The major function of this test is to prepare sophomores and juniors for the SAT by familiarizing them with the types of questions asked and by providing diagnostic feedback. *There is little correlation between the sophomore PSAT and the SATs, unless a student scores very, very well.* There is, however, much more correlation between the junior year PSAT and SAT. The PSAT is offered only once a year (in October) and is administered by the College Counseling Office.

**SAT (SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST)**

The SAT is one of the two major standardized tests used by colleges in the admissions process. Like the PSAT, it contains multiple sections that test two different areas: math and evidence-based reading and writing. There is also an optional essay section, where students are asked

to respond critically in writing to a specific prompt. The reading section has five passages based in different disciplines, and students are asked to answer questions about what they read. The math sections (there are two) include questions that cover algebra, geometry, data analysis, and advanced math topics; testers may use a calculator on one of the math sections only. The writing section tests students' knowledge of writing style, though there are also questions on grammar usage and mechanics (though far fewer than the older version of the SAT). Testers receive two scores ranging from 200 to 800 points: one for math and one for evidence-based reading and writing. The essay is scored separately, and colleges also receive the separate essay score; many colleges do not require the essay portion of the SAT.

STUDENTS are responsible for registering themselves for the SAT. Please visit [www.sat.collegeboard.org](http://www.sat.collegeboard.org) for more information.

**SAT SUBJECT TESTS**

The SAT Subject Tests are hour-long, multiple-choice exams that test your knowledge of a specific subject area. Students who have done advanced coursework in a particular subject area here at Maret or who have demonstrated advanced proficiency in a subject area are encouraged to take Subject Tests in areas they consider their strengths. Though most colleges do not require Subject Tests, a strong score or two can supplement an application. Students should consult with their teachers about taking a Subject Test in a particular subject area. STUDENTS are responsible for registering themselves for the Subject Tests and for reporting their scores. Please visit [www.sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests/sat-subject-tests](http://www.sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests/sat-subject-tests) for more information.

**ACT (AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM EXAM)**

The ACT is the other primary standardized test used in college admissions. Originally, it was the primary test for students in the Midwest (the ACT is based in Iowa City, Iowa), but now students from all across the country (and even abroad) are familiar with the ACT and choose to take it over the SAT. According to the ACT, their test measures general educational development and knowledge, rather than reasoning skills. The test contains four sections: English, Math, Science Reasoning, and Reading; there is an optional writing test as well, which the vast majority

of selective colleges and universities require. Students receive sub-scores for each section of the test and a composite score, which is an average of the sub-scores; each subject area is scored from 1 to 36 points, with the median composite score being a 21. The writing score is not included in the calculation of the composite score but is reported. Many colleges that require SAT Subject Tests waive them if a student is submitting the ACT as their primary standardized test, but you are responsible for verifying which test scores your schools require.

STUDENTS are responsible for registering themselves for the ACT and for reporting their scores. Please visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for more information.

**AP EXAMS (ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS)**

Advanced Placement Exams were originally designed to give college credit for college level work done in high school, though today many colleges no longer offer credit for high scores. AP Exam scores are not required in the admission process at any American college or university, but they may be if you are considering schools abroad. If a student does well on an AP Exam, we encourage students to report a strong score as it can suggest mastery of a

specific discipline's foundational material or provide higher course placement in college. *Students should check-in with their teachers about possibly taking one or more AP Exams, but should not feel any pressure to take one.* AP exam scores of 4 or 5 are included on the Maret transcript.

**SAT VS. ACT**

Students have a choice of which standardized testing they can take and report to colleges and universities. We encourage you to speak with the College Counseling Office if you have questions about which test to take. Many students experiment with both before making a decision. The vast majority of Maret students will take the PSAT twice (once in the tenth grade, once in the eleventh grade)—a great practice run for the SAT. *The College Counseling Office also offers a practice ACT exam to juniors in the fall, and encourages all juniors to try to take it before making a choice of which test to take.* Ultimately, the choice is yours. To help you learn more about each test, we have put together the following comparison chart for your consideration.

	SAT	ACT
<b>TEST LENGTH</b>	3 hours (without essay) or 3 hours 50 minutes with optional essay	2 hours 55 minutes (without essay) or 3 hours 35 minutes (with essay)
<b>SCORING</b>	Highest combined score: 1600 (800 on each of two sections, reported individually; a composite is not calculated)	Highest composite score: 36 (36 on each of four sections, reported individually; composite is an average of the four sections)
<b>ESSAY</b>	Optional; recommended	Writing section/essay is optional (but required by most colleges); always administered as the last part of the exam
<b>SECTIONS</b>	4 required, with 1 each of Reading, Math (calculator), Writing and Language, Math (no calculator); Essay is optional; 154 questions in total	4 required, with 1 each of: English, Math, Science Reasoning, Reading; Writing is optional; 215 questions in total
<b>WRONG ANSWERS</b>	Do not count against your score	Do not count against your score
<b>VOCABULARY</b>	Tested in context, so as to test inferential reasoning rather than memorized definitions	Emphasized less; more grammar, punctuation, and syntax is tested
<b>QUESTION TYPES</b>	Critical Reading: multiple choice Writing and Language: multiple choice Math: multiple choice and student-generated responses Essay: critical analysis of argument	English: multiple choice Math: multiple choice Science Reasoning: multiple choice Reading: multiple choice Writing: essay

## STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE of which standardized test they can take and report to colleges and universities.

We encourage you to speak with the College Counseling Office if you have questions about which test to take; many students experiment with both before making a decision.

## PREP COURSES, TUTORS, AND ONLINE PROGRAMS

The SAT and ACT measure the reading, writing, and mathematical skills a student has accrued over his or her lifetime. If you have not done a lot of reading in general, cramming will not help much. However, many students can benefit from SAT or ACT preparation courses, tutoring, or online programs, which familiarize them with the type of questions they will be asked and ease some of their fears about the tests. SAT or ACT classes can narrow down math content, boost your vocabulary, give you a chance to practice strategies, make you comfortable with the test, and provide a structure for study. But SAT and ACT courses are expensive. Fortunately, there are practice SAT and ACT questions available for free online, as well as full-length practice exams. Practicing using these free resources can help you prepare for these tests. Practice should be done under timed conditions so that you get used to the proper pacing of each test. How you prepare for the SAT or ACT is a personal choice, but *we encourage you to speak with the*

*college counseling team before investing in any expensive preparation.*

### A FEW NOTES ON TEST PREP COURSES AND TUTORING

In a research report done by the National Association of College Admissions Counseling titled *Preparation for College Admission Exams* (NACAC, 2009), researchers concluded the following about SAT and ACT preparation courses and tutoring:

1. All students should be encouraged to prepare before taking admission tests, but the potential benefits of test preparation must be balanced against financial and opportunity cost.
2. Because empirical evidence suggests that the average effects of commercial coaching programs are small, students should be counseled to consider less costly forms of test preparation. High school students and their families should be counseled to be wary of coaching rip-offs.

Currently, Capital Educators provides test preparation services for Maret students, beginning in the spring of your junior year. However, families may pursue whichever test prep option best suits your budget, schedule, or learning style. Should your family wish to invest in a course or tutor, we will be happy to provide you with advice and counsel. We encourage all students to take advantage of Khan Academy's FREE online SAT preparation ([www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)) if they are taking the SAT. Khan Academy partnered with the College Board to design this free online program, and we believe it is one of the best preparation opportunities out there. Students preparing for the ACT may also qualify for free preparation help through Kaplan. *However, it is important to remember that a student's academic work is the most important*

**THE REAL CONSUMER QUESTION is not whether for some people coaching may result in higher scores,** but whether the expenditures by many, and it involves millions of dollars, will make a significant difference in their educational outcomes to be worth it. Various studies of test preparation reveal that the gains from test preparation courses are quite modest.

— Fred Hargadon,  
Former Dean of Admissions at Swarthmore  
College and Princeton University  
and former Head of the College Board

*part of their college application. Test preparation should NOT interfere with a student's academic progress in their Maret curricular work. Additionally, families should not feel pressured to invest more time and money into test preparation than they are comfortable with. There are plenty of free or inexpensive ways to prepare that can help improve students' scores.*

## TESTING ADVICE AND TIPS

We want all juniors to take both the SAT and Subject Tests (if appropriate) or the ACT this year and to have the opportunity to retake the SAT or ACT if their results are lower than they would like. Since colleges will consider the highest scores of each section of the SAT over multiple administrations, or your highest ACT, it is usually to your advantage to take the test more than once. Keep in mind, however, that most schools now require that you submit scores from ALL administrations of the test you take. Taking the test more than three times is usually seen as extraneous. *It is also important to remember that both tests have been designed so that a typical student will do their best in the fall of their senior year of high school. However, given our understanding of the Maret curriculum, we feel our students are best suited to test for the first time in the latter half of the junior year.*

### JUNIOR YEAR: WHEN AND WHICH TEST?

- Take the PSAT and practice ACT in October; compare your scores, consult with the College Counseling Office about which test to take if you are unclear about which you prefer based on your experience and performance with each.
- All juniors should register for the SAT in March or the ACT in either February or April
- The SAT Subject Tests may be taken in May or June of the junior year. Many juniors decide to take these in June because they have finished their courses completely and find that studying for their final exams and AP Exams (where applicable) helps them study for the Subject Tests. Several Subject Tests are only offered in June, so check the College Board's website for details.

### MAKE SURE TO:

- Register in advance.
- Get a good night's sleep the evening before the test/s.
- Get to the correct test center in plenty of time—about 20 minutes before the official start time.

- Have the correct admission ticket, photo identification, calculator, and #2 pencils; you should refer to the websites of both testing agencies for rules and regulations regarding these.

### SENIOR YEAR

- We urge all seniors to retake the SAT and Subject Tests or the ACT during their senior year unless previous scores are exemplary; the SAT in October and Subject Tests in November, or the September, October, or November ACT are usually the most popular test dates. Register early to ensure you have a spot reserved for your preferred testing location.
- Have your scores sent directly from the College Board or the ACT to the colleges to which you are applying. *If you are applying Early Decision or Early Action, you must check with your schools to see which is the latest test date they will consider. Note too, that this often means you will have to submit your scores before seeing them, as doing so will delay their delivery.*



Visiting college campuses in person can be one of the most helpful activities of your college search. Starting in your junior year, we encourage you to find time to take a quick visit to some of our local colleges: the University of Maryland, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, American University, Catholic University, Goucher College, St. Mary's College of Maryland, George Mason University, and the University of Mary Washington are all within a 70-mile radius of Maret. These initial tours will give you an idea of different types of colleges and universities. There are several small liberal arts colleges, including Haverford, Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, Dickinson, and Franklin and Marshall, as well as larger schools, like the University of Virginia, the University of Pennsylvania, and West Virginia University, within a 2–3 hour drive. Using these more local schools to get a sense of how life is like at different *types* of institutions will help you frame your college search moving forward.

Once you have some idea of what type(s) of school you might like to see outside of the immediate area, consider planning a college trip. Many students have found that the spring vacation of their junior year and the following summer are good times to get an overview of many colleges.

Although the summer provides time to visit, few students may be on campus, and the campus will possibly feel different than it would during the spring or fall semester. There are no specific times set aside by Maret for seniors to visit colleges in the fall, but you will be able to make plans to visit colleges during the first semester. Teachers will try to understand when you miss school to visit colleges, but you will be responsible for making up any missed assignments according to your teachers' instruction. As you plan, it is important to minimize missed class time as much as possible and perhaps use

fall visits to participate in organized visit programs that maximize your campus visit experience.

Prior to visiting colleges, call, research the schools' websites, or email to learn about campus visits. Most schools will offer a group information session and tour, sometimes several times each day. These are good opportunities to learn more about academic and social life at these schools, as well as to get valuable information about the admissions process at each. Before you go, read up on the school to make sure you are reasonably well informed about it so that you can make the most of your visit by asking pointed, thoughtful questions of your tour guides and admissions officers (who usually lead the group information sessions).

Visiting classes, the school bookstore, and the library, and talking to as many students as possible are good ways of finding out about the academic atmosphere of the school. It is also a good idea to have a meal in one of the dining halls, just to see what the food is like (this will be important to your daily life on campus). Spending a night on campus is also possible at many schools and can give you a good idea about what life is like after dark at each.

## COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

The importance of an interview varies considerably from college to college. Some schools require interviews; most do not; and still others view having an optional interview as an indication of your interest. Some schools consider interviews as informational for the applicant, while others use the interview to evaluate and distinguish among candidates. No matter how a college considers interviews, a good one can only help you and provide an opportunity to communicate what is unique about yourself.

Most interviewers—whether admissions officers, current students, or alumni—will try to create a friendly, relaxed atmosphere so that you can respond comfortably and honestly. They will not only ask you questions, they will expect you to ask questions of them. So prepare for your interview ahead of time. Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Come to the interview prepared.** Take time beforehand to think about what is valuable to you in your college search and prepare questions that will help you learn what each college offers to help you maximize your experience. A college journal is a handy tool for this.
- 2. Know the college.** *Do not ask questions that can readily be answered by a quick perusal of the college's website or a college guide.* Rather, ask questions about what you have already learned about the school. For example, instead of asking how many geographical areas students come from, ask what effect that distribution has on the campus atmosphere. Instead of asking whether they have a psychology department, ask whether it has an experimental or clinical emphasis, or whether research opportunities are available, and what specific research students participated in last year. If a senior thesis is required, ask for examples of several recent titles.
- 3. Ask honest, thoughtful questions whose answers you really want to know.** Don't ask questions simply to ask questions. It is impossible for you to know everything about a school, so think hard about why you are interested in the school and how it might fit your needs as a student. This should help you come up with at least two or three questions about academics alone.
- 4. Know your strengths and weaknesses.** Be prepared to elaborate on the former and explain the latter. Talking about either will not necessarily help, but acknowledging that you are self-aware and can maturely articulate your interests, talents, achievements, and areas in need of improvement will leave a positive impression.
- 5. Anticipate the questions you might be asked** (some are listed below). Again, be thoughtful about how you might respond and why you might answer them in a particular way.
- 6. Answer the *why*.** "What size is your senior class?" requires a short, straightforward answer, but "What is your favorite course?" not only should be answered with "20th Century Europe" or "Advanced Chemistry," but an explanation of why it is your favorite class. Open-ended questions require you to elaborate. Always answer the *why* behind the questions you are asked.
- 7. Be you.** *DO NOT* try to be someone you think they want. Authenticity is important to admissions officers, who can sniff out artifice from a mile away. Believe us: you are great, so be confident and earnest. Try to be calm and enjoy the person with whom you are talking. Be sincere, show some humility, and, most important, be honest.
- 8. DO NOT TAKE OUT OR USE YOUR CELL PHONE.** It is rude and suggests you are disinterested.
- 9. Possible interviewer's questions:**
  - What books have you read lately? Is there one that really impacted you? Why?
  - What are your favorite courses and why?
  - What did you do last summer?
  - What do you expect to gain from a college education?
  - What academic areas are you most interested in?
  - What extracurricular activities do you like most? Why?
  - How would you describe yourself to someone who did not know you?
  - How have you spent your free time?
  - Why are you thinking about going to college?
  - Who are your heroes?
  - Who has been your favorite teacher and why?
  - How have you changed throughout high school?
  - Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
  - What kind of learner are you?
  - What do you like the most about your high school? The least?
  - How do you see yourself contributing to life outside the classroom in college?
  - Talk about a project, classroom assignment, or experience that led to an "aha!" moment.
  - If you could change one thing about your high school experience, what would it be and why would you change it?
  - Do you feel that your high school transcript truly reflects your abilities? If not, why?
  - What is your biggest weakness? What is your greatest strength?
  - If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?
  - If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go, and why?
  - Do you have any interesting or unique hobbies?

**MANY STUDENTS HAVE FOUND that the spring vacation of their junior year and the following summer** are good times to get an overview of many colleges.

**M**any students who have enjoyed playing sports during their high school years want to continue playing and competing in college. College athletics are a great way to meet new people, provide structure to your day, represent your school, and stay in shape. But the recruitment process and how it influences college admissions can be complex. Below is helpful information for you and your family if you are considering playing a varsity sport in college.

#### FIGURING OUT IF YOU CAN PLAY

As much as you love a sport and are committed to it, your ability to play in college will be determined by a wide range of factors. Even if a student has the ability and skill to play at an elite level, sometimes they are not recruited to play because the schools they are interested in do not have a need for them at the time. So, in order to figure out if you can play a sport in college, it is a good idea to do the following:

- **Check-in with your Maret coach/es and club coach/es prior to your senior year and let them know you might be interested in playing sports in college.** They can likely give you great advice on how and where to improve your game and athleticism, help you put together an athletics resumé, introduce you to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA's) rules and regulations for recruitment, and put you in touch with students who have been through the recruitment process before.
- **Learn about the NCAA's eligibility rules.** The NCAA is the governing body of college athletics at all levels, from the biggest and highest (Division I) to the smallest (Division III). To be able to play at a Division I or II school, you must meet certain academic eligibility requirements. Knowing these requirements early will help you understand if you are academically eligible to play at these schools.

- **Attend showcases and tournaments outside of school.** This is where college scouts check out who is coming up. If you are not competing well at these events, chances are you will not be on a coach's radar.

#### HOW RECRUITMENT WORKS

Although college coaches pound the pavement to discover new talent every year around the country, most student athletes are discovered by college coaches because they are proactive in reaching out to the coaches. The NCAA limits how often and when college coaches can contact prospective student athletes—in fact, coaches cannot talk to you until your junior year. However, if they don't know about you, they likely won't talk to you in your junior year.

So how can you get on a coach's radar? One of the easiest ways is to fill out a prospective athlete inquiry form. These are found on a college's website, typically under the athletics section. You will be asked to provide contact information, as well as both academic and athletic information (e.g., your height, weight, position played, regional or national ranking, club team coach, school coach, etc.) for the coaching staff to review. Some prospective athlete forms may also require a resumé of your athletic career or a film of you playing. Your Maret coaches can help you fill out the questionnaires, as well as help you put together a film or reel of you playing. For coaches of individual sports, such as tennis, swimming and diving, fencing, wrestling, or gymnastics, a regional or national ranking, or placements and times at competitive meets will be necessary.

If you hear back from coaches, keep in mind that they are likely talking to many other students like you. Do not assume that you will have a coach's support in the admissions process simply because s/he

One of the easiest ways to get on a coach's radar is to **fill out a PROSPECTIVE ATHLETE INQUIRY FORM.**

calls you. Rather, see this initial conversation as an opportunity to learn more about the athletics program at the school, your sport at the school, and the coach. If you like what you hear, you may want to schedule an unofficial visit to the school (meaning you pay the expenses for it).

If you interest a coach, they will likely want to see you playing. Every year, Maret coaches host dozens of college coaches on our campus. Meeting coaches while they are here and having the chance to play in front of them is helpful. So, too, is having coaches see you playing outside of Maret. Be sure to ask your Maret and non-Maret coaches if and when college recruiters are visiting.

#### THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

NCAA Division I and Division II schools offer athletics scholarships. If you are interested in playing at an NCAA Division I or Division II school, you **MUST** be vetted by the NCAA's National Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse determines your academic eligibility to play an interscholastic sport at the Division I and II levels. If you want to be recruited to play at a Division I or II school and receive a scholarship, you must meet the NCAA's eligibility requirements.

For both Division I and II schools, students' **MUST** have earned credits in a range of core academic areas. The NCAA Clearinghouse updates approved courses for credit each year for every accredited high school, including Maret. The required earned credits follow:

#### DIVISIONS I AND II—16 CORE COURSES:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics at Algebra I and higher
- 2 years of natural and/or physical science, including 1 year of laboratory work
- 1 year of additional English, mathematics, or natural/physical science
- 2 years of social science
- 4 years of additional courses from any area above, foreign language, or non-doctrinal religion or philosophy

To determine eligibility, the NCAA Clearinghouse uses a sliding scale of grade point average (GPA) in core academic requirement courses and SAT or ACT scores (the sum of each of the sections, minus the writing section). The minimum GPA is a 2.30 to be eligible to play in Division I and 2.00 in Division II. It is important to note, however, that on or after August 1, 2018, the NCAA is changing its eligibility requirements for Division II student athletes. The NCAA Quick Reference Guide is a great resource for those beginning the recruitment process: [http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Quick\\_Reference\\_Sheet.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Quick_Reference_Sheet.pdf).



While all NCAA Division I and II schools must abide by the NCAA's eligibility standards, many leagues within the divisions (like the Ivy League and Patriot League) have their own minimum eligibility requirements that far exceed the NCAA's.

#### NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT

For a student to officially be offered an athletic scholarship by a coach and school, the student, a parent or legal guardian, and the college's director of athletics must sign a National Letter of Intent (NLI). The NLI is a contract between the student and institution which is administered by the NCAA on behalf of the Collegiate Commissioners Association. It is important to note that the NLI is not an offer of admission to the college. **Only a signed letter by the college's dean of admission offering acceptance to the college is an offer of admission.** In fact, the NLI states:

*This NLI shall be declared null and void if the institution named in this document notifies me in writing that I have been denied admission or, by the opening day of classes in the fall, has failed to provide me with a written notice of admission, provided I have submitted a complete admission application...If I am eligible for admission, but the institution named in this document defers my admission to a subsequent term, the NLI will be declared null and void.*

**In other words, even if you sign a National Letter of Intent, it does not mean you are heading to College X. Only when College X's dean of admission sends you an acceptance letter can you be 100% sure you are on your way to College X.**

### NCAA DIVISION III

While NCAA Division I and II athletics are the largest and most organized sports programs and offer athletic scholarships, most smaller colleges participate at the NCAA Division III level.

The most well known of these schools tend to be liberal arts colleges, though not exclusively, and compete mostly in regional conferences with limited travel required. Unlike Division I and II schools, *colleges that participate in NCAA Division III athletics do not and cannot offer athletic scholarships.* Thus, they are regulated much less by the NCAA.

Division III schools do offer a high level of competition, despite what you may have heard, but they do not invest in athletics financially the way most Division I and II institutions do.

Moreover, they do not have a common eligibility process like most Division I and II schools. Instead, many of the over 400 Division III schools in the United States belong to a conference that has its own rules about admission, so it is important for you to understand these if you are interested in playing at a Division III school.

The more commonly known Division III athletic conferences are:

- **NESCAC (The New England Small Colleges Athletic Conference)**, which includes: Amherst College, Bates College, Bowdoin College, Colby College, Connecticut College, Hamilton College, Middlebury College, Trinity College (CT), Tufts University, Wesleyan University, and Williams College



- **SCIAC (The Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference)**, which includes: California Institute of Technology, California Lutheran University, Chapman University, Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges, Occidental College, Pomona-Pitzer Colleges, University of Redlands, and Whittier College
- **NWC (The Northwest Conference)**, which includes: Lewis & Clark College, University of Puget Sound, Whitman College, and Willamette University
- **Centennial Conference**, which includes: Bryn Mawr College, Dickinson College, Franklin and Marshall College, Gettysburg College, Johns Hopkins University, McDaniel College, Muhlenberg College, Swarthmore College, Ursinus College, and Washington College
- **UAA (The University Athletic Conference)**, which includes: Brandeis University, Carnegie Mellon University, Case Western Reserve University, Emory University, New York University, University of Chicago, University of Rochester, and Washington University in St. Louis
- **Liberty League**, which includes: Bard College, Clarkson University, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Skidmore College, St. Lawrence University, Union College, and Vassar College

For a student to officially be offered an athletic scholarship by a coach and school, **the student, a parent or legal guardian, and the college's director of athletics must sign a NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT (NLI).**

**B**ecause college costs keep rising, more and more families are concerned about how they are going to afford the expense. Fortunately, colleges and universities are offering more and more financial aid to students and their families than ever before. In particular, many of the most selective and priciest schools in the country have made aid available to families of varying income levels. Many middle-income families who think they will not qualify for need-based financial aid may be surprised with the generous financial aid packages they receive. Some colleges practice need-blind admissions, which means that a family's ability to pay for college will not affect the student's admission decision. Some schools, however, are need-aware or need-sensitive, meaning that they do take into account a family's ability to pay or need level when making the final decision on a student's application for admission. It is thus important to understand a college's financial aid policies before applying if you think financial aid will be a determining factor in your decision to attend a particular institution.

#### WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

Financial aid refers to a wide spectrum of funding sources available to students and their families to help reduce the cost of attendance at a particular college. It is important to understand that *every college and university has its own unique way of determining your family's financial need.* Financial aid comes in two forms: need-based and merit-based.

**Need-Based Financial Aid** is aid provided to families of students who demonstrate they are unable to pay for the entire cost of attendance at a particular college. Who determines need, or the amount a family can afford to pay? Ultimately, the colleges themselves make this decision. However, they depend upon two organizations to give them guidelines for determining eligibility. Some colleges depend only on the federal Department of Education, which asks students and their families to complete the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) beginning in October. The FAFSA is required by ALL COLLEGES. Some colleges also ask for a more detailed assessment of a family's finances, known as the College Scholarship Service's **CSS PROFILE**. Both the CSS and Federal Government determine a family's Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) based on a complex formula that takes into consideration the size of your family, the

number of children in the family who will be in college, all of the family's income, savings and assets, the age of parents/guardians (relative to retirement), and tax liability. Both organizations will send the results of their analysis to your prospective colleges and you. Each college, however, may look differently at what the Federal Government and the CSS have decided about your need.

## MAJOR FORMS OF FINANCIAL AID

#### PELL GRANTS

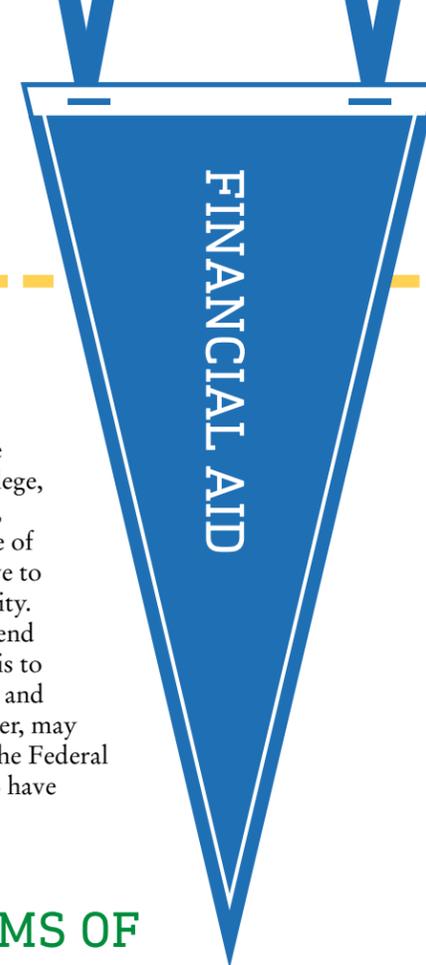
These are federal entitlement grants offered only to students whose family incomes qualify them for other federal programs such as free lunch subsidies. Family incomes of Pell Grant recipients are typically within the bottom quintile of incomes nationally (roughly \$30,000/year for a family of four). Size of family is taken into account. The maximum amount of a Pell Grant is \$5,815/year. *Like all grants, these do not have to be repaid.*

#### FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANTS (FSEOG)

These grants have similar income requirements as the Pell Grant and are awarded to students at the college they are attending, rather than directly from the federal government. Schools have limited FSEOG funding and award these grants to their students with the greatest demonstrated need who also qualify for a Pell Grant. *The FSEOG does not have to be repaid.*

#### COLLEGE-SPECIFIC NEED-BASED GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

These are awards that come *directly from the college*, usually given to students who demonstrate financial need. They differ from college to college. Most colleges



and universities have their own financial aid budgets (this is usually one of the largest line items in any college's annual budget) and distribute their grants and scholarships directly from their own offices of financial aid. These grants and scholarships are free money; *they do not need to be paid back to the college.*

### COLLEGE-SPECIFIC MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

As opposed to need-based awards, merit scholarships, which only some schools give, are awarded to students who meet criteria for academic, artistic, personal, or athletic excellence, regardless of the family's financial need. Some colleges require an additional application for their merit scholarships, while others only require an application for admission. These awards are funded by special endowments at the college and *do not have to be paid back.*

### FEDERAL DIRECT LOANS

If you complete and submit a FAFSA to the Department of Education, you qualify for a Direct Loan, regardless of your family's financial situation. Direct Loans (formerly called Stafford Loans) are the most common student loan and are used by millions of college students.

Students can borrow a maximum of \$5,500 to \$12,000/year through the Direct Loan program, depending on their year in college and other factors. These loans typically have very attractive interest rates and may be subsidized by the federal government, meaning that they do not accrue interest until graduation; or the loans are unsubsidized, meaning that they begin to accrue interest once they are dispersed to your college. Either way, Direct Loans do not go into repayment until you have graduated from college. If you leave college, you will have to start repaying them. *Like any loan, Direct Loans must be repaid.*

### FEDERAL PERKINS LOANS

These are loans available to students with exceptionally high financial need. Typically, the college is the lender, though the funding comes from the federal government. The interest rate for the Perkins Loan is 5%; funding depends on your family's need level and how much other financial aid you are receiving. *These must also be repaid.*

### FEDERAL PLUS LOANS

The PLUS Loan, or Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students, is a loan for parents, who may borrow up to the total cost of attendance, minus any other financial aid amounts, for each dependent child who is enrolled in an accredited college or university at least half-time. There are many different repayment options, but borrowers typically must not have an adverse credit history to qualify. *These loans are in the parents' names and, like*

**COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE OFFERING MORE AND MORE financial aid to students and their families than ever before.** In particular, many of the most selective and priciest schools in the country have made aid available to families of varying income levels.

*all loans, must be paid back. Unlike the student loans noted above, repayment for PLUS loans begins before the student has graduated.*

### FEDERAL WORK STUDY

Funding is available from the federal government to subsidize campus job salaries for students with financial need through the Federal Work Study Program. Students who qualify for Federal Work Study are typically guaranteed a part-time job at their college and must work to earn this aid. Students will receive a paycheck to help offset expenses, but it is important to note that *the amount of Work Study awarded is not deducted from the tuition bill.*

### STATE OR LOCAL FUNDING

Maryland, Virginia, and DC each offer different funding sources and options for their residents—from grants and scholarships to loans and savings plans. The most common form of state support is in-state tuition at public colleges and universities, which makes the total cost of attendance at these schools far lower than at private institutions and out-of-state public institutions. Residents of the District of Columbia, who do not have a comprehensive four-year public university system, may benefit from DC TAG, the District's Tuition Assistance Grant. This grant provides residents of DC with up to \$10,000 to attend most public universities around the country; \$2,500 to attend a Historically Black College or University; or \$2,500 to attend a private Washington, DC college or university. Please note: DC TAG funding is contingent upon board funding and is not guaranteed each year. Also, it is a

common misconception that DC TAG is equivalent to a student receiving in-state tuition rates. This is not the case: *DC TAG is a fixed amount of aid and oftentimes does not make up the difference between in-state and out-of-state costs.*

### PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, different community organizations, foundations, professional associations, fraternities and sororities, religious institutions, and civic groups offer millions of dollars to students through their own scholarship programs. Please speak with your college counselor in the fall of your senior year about exploring these possibilities.

### PRIVATE LOANS

Some major and local banks offer student loans. Let the buyer beware: some of these products are attractive and have advantageous interest rates and repayment options. Others, however, have variable or very high interest rates.

### A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT LOANS

While borrowing is not ideal, the reality is that most American college students today borrow to pay for at least some of their college educations. These loans can help students build their credit and often give them a sense of financial responsibility for the first time. We highly recommend, however, that students not borrow more over the four years that they are in college than they think they will be making in their first job after graduation. Most federal loans have income-dependent repayment options or, if fixed, have to be repaid over 15 years, making the burden of, say, a \$30,000 total note, manageable. Borrowing more than that over the four years, however, is not advised. It is important too, to think beyond the undergraduate years. If you are considering pursuing graduate work that will require loans as well, it is important to keep undergraduate loan debt manageable.

### ADDITIONAL TIPS

- **Talk to each other early** about finances for college.
- **Do not be scared** of sticker prices, calling financial aid offices, or asking a college for more aid than they initially offer.
- **Use calculators** provided on college websites to get an estimate of their cost for your family. These are free to use and usually quite accurate since they are college-specific.
- **Do your taxes early**, if possible, as the FAFSA becomes available January 1 and is usually due to most colleges by March 1.
- **Organize yourself** so that you know each college's financial aid deadlines and documentation requirements.
- **Educate yourself** about how each college determines need and eligibility for aid.
- **Come to Maret's Financial Aid Workshop**, which is in December and for parents and guardians of seniors.
- **Remember that we can help you.**
- **Learn more at these websites:**  
Federal Student Aid ([studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov))  
*US Department of Education guide to federal financial aid*

Fastweb ([fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com))  
*A free scholarship search service*

FinAid ([finaid.org](http://finaid.org))  
*The SmartStudent™ Guide to Financial Aid*



## TAKING A GAP YEAR

Every year, a number of Maret seniors consider a Gap Year after high school. Instead of matriculating in the fall after graduation at a college or university, they spend a year exploring special interests, often outside an academic setting. This option is becoming increasingly popular as students and their families realize the benefits of students taking some time to explore, mature, and grow before committing themselves to four years of expensive higher education.

We encourage all Maret students to explore the possibility of a Gap Year. Maret graduates who have taken Gap

Years have found them to be very rewarding. Experiences such as working on a goat farm, learning to raise heritage crops in Italy, interning on Capitol Hill or for a business, volunteering to help support endangered mammals in South Africa, taking a film course in New York City, and participating in international horse shows are just a few of the opportunities that have attracted recent Maret graduates during their Gap Years.

Some families wonder if taking a Gap Year might offer students a chance to make themselves more appealing to colleges, potentially ameliorating a less-than-stellar academic record. It is important to remember that the high school transcript—the record of courses taken and grades earned in high school—remains the single most important factor considered by admissions officers during the college process. Students should not expect their ability to get into a particular college to be substantially enhanced by the Gap Year experience.

On the other hand, students may well discover that their attitude towards and motivation to succeed in college increases as a result of time away from school. More mature and experienced, they will be better aware of why they are in school and more prepared to make the most of college.

We encourage all students to apply and commit to a college or university before embarking on a Gap Year. Colleges generally are happy to defer admission and permit committed students to take a Gap Year, as long as they have a well-considered plan for the year.

Maret's college counseling team will be happy to assist any student considering a Gap Year to think carefully about some reasons for doing so, to discuss pros and cons, and to suggest resources to help students develop a concrete plan for the year. Some resources for exploring Gap Year possibilities can be found at the American Gap Association ([www.americangap.org](http://www.americangap.org)). In addition, there is usually a Gap Year Fair in February in the DC area (for the past several years it has been held at Georgetown Day School).



## INDEPENDENT COUNSELORS

Some families wonder if they should hire the services of an outside educational consultant or independent college counselor. While we understand that our students and families encounter external pressures in the college search process and that special needs may arise for individual students, we do not believe that the vast majority of Maret students need such services. Our professional experience in college admissions and college counseling, in addition to our knowledge of Maret's unique curriculum and academic philosophies, ensures that our students receive personalized, appropriate, and accurate advice and information that is customized to them. While there are many professional and skilled independent consultants, they are generally available to help students who do not have access to one-on-one college counseling resources like we have at Maret. Thus, please carefully consider the following before deciding to pay for additional services for your student.

The field of independent counseling came into existence as a result of inadequate counseling resources at public high schools. There was, and is, a clear need for many students and their families to find information about the college process outside some public high schools, especially in areas where student-to-counselor ratios can be almost 250:1 or greater. But, for others, independent counseling has developed into a *perceived* necessary commodity. Even through the student-to-counselor ratio at Maret is about 27:1 and our students have extraordinary college choices each year, we sometimes hear some version of: "If I don't hire an outside counselor, I am not supporting my child,"

**TRULY, THE MARET COLLEGE COUNSELING TEAM is your student's primary and best-resourced advocate in the college process.** We operate in ways that independent counselors cannot, and our job is to support your student throughout his or her college search and application process.

"Our neighbors hired a private 'tutor' so we think we should, too," "If I don't hire someone, my child will not get into the best schools s/he can," and, finally, "More help is always better."

To be frank, comprehensive, one-on-one college counseling resources that personalize the college process is included in the tuition you pay. We have three college counselors in addition to a head of school and assistant head of school who offer an extra line of support and who are dedicated to working with your student throughout the college search and application process. We provide focused, individualized attention as well as group presentations and workshops to parents, guardians, and students. Because our student-to-counselor ratio is so low, we are able to meet one-on-one with each student on multiple occasions during the junior and senior years, while providing assistance to families with students in ninth and tenth grade. We have extensive knowledge of the college admissions process at hundreds of colleges and universities nationally and internationally, as well as extensive experience working with students who have special circumstances: those who are looking for schools that work well with students with learning differences,

those who want to be recruited to play a sport, or those who want to pursue the visual and/or performing arts in college.

Truly, the Maret college counseling team is your student's primary and best-resourced advocate in the college process. We operate in ways that independent counselors cannot, and our job is to support your student throughout his or her college search and application process. Time

**WE BELIEVE that college admission is not a contest to be won or a consumer commodity to be bought:** it is a process through which students will learn more about themselves and grow.

spent with an independent counselor is time that your student is not meeting with us, meaning less time for us to get to know him or her well and cultivate a relationship. Independent counseling takes up time that your student could use to study, to participate in an activity s/he loves, or to spend more time with you, family, and friends.

As an office, we will keep you and your student informed about due dates, and we will meet and communicate regularly and as often as you would like. However, our philosophy is to empower students to advocate for and organize themselves. We want our students to develop decision-making skills and will thus not nag them or complete work for them. We recognize that true procrastinators or students with severe organizational struggles may need help with motivation and organization at home, and thus working with an independent college counselor may feel necessary. But providing more support may not actually motivate your student to engage in the work of the college process, so we encourage you to carefully review the resources and recommendations of the Independent Educational Consultants Association (ICEA) before you sign a contract with someone outside Maret.

Employing an independent counselor will not hurt our feelings, nor will it cause us to work with your student any differently. If you do employ an outside counselor, please let us know so that we can understand where you and your child are receiving information. We do not want children to feel uncomfortable if they receive conflicting information, nor do we want them to feel they cannot share with us that they are working with an independent counselor. However, we also do not want students to start this process earlier than necessary and thereby feel that college preparation is an activity in and of itself, rather than the natural next step in their educational path. In the end, we truly care about your child. We want the best for all our students and hope that the college process will not dominate their memories of high school.

We believe that college admission is not a contest to be won or a consumer commodity to be bought: it is a process through which students will learn more about themselves and grow. No college counselor anywhere can guarantee a specific outcome, but the Maret college counseling team can promise you that we will provide you and your child with the best information and attention possible through the time working with us. As with all things at Maret, the college process is an educational journey: one which, with the help of our college counselors, will teach our students how to do research, make wise choices, think critically, and realize a well-deserved sense of pride and accomplishment when they are offered admission and select where they will enroll after Maret.

### RESOURCES

National Association of College Admission Counseling ([www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org))

Independent Educational Consultants Association ([www.iecaonline.com](http://www.iecaonline.com))

American School Counselor Association ([www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org))

There are literally hundreds of college guides and websites available to help you and your family negotiate the college search and admissions process. Unfortunately, not all of them are good. Some are edited and republished each year, while others merely have a new year slapped on them and are marked up a few dollars. As we have mentioned, it is important for you to be an informed consumer of information about colleges. How information is presented, who is presenting it, and what their intentions are may not always be clear. Thus, it is important to try your best to distinguish factual, objective information from opinions and hearsay or outdated perspectives. Below are several great guides, books, and websites to help you learn more about different colleges and the admissions process.

### GENERAL GUIDES ABOUT VARIOUS SELECT COLLEGES

- *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even if You're Not a Straight-A Student.* Lauren Pope. Penguin Press. Pope highlights 40 lesser-known colleges that tap into students' potential to help them reach the academic achievement of which they are capable. *We'd love for every parent to read this book, if possible.* These schools offer a CTCL specific college fair and have a shared website: [www.ctcl.org](http://www.ctcl.org)
- *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*, Edward Fiske. Sourcebooks, Inc. Great narratives about the academic and social experiences on hundreds of nationally recognized colleges and universities and a few Canadian and British institutions.
- *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, Barron's Educational Series, Inc. General guide with basics about hundreds of domestic colleges and universities.
- *The Insider's Guide to the Colleges: Students on Campus Tell You What You Really Want to Know*, Yale Daily News Staff. Current students voice their perspectives on the more than 300 colleges and universities they attend.

### SPECIALIZED GUIDES FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- *The Multicultural Student's Guide to Colleges*, The Noonday Press. Thorough guide about multicultural life and diversity at over 150 colleges and universities.
- *The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities*, Random House, Inc. Guide to domestic colleges and universities that provide services for students with learning disabilities. Discusses services, academic life, and campus life.
- *Princeton Review Student Athlete's Guide to College*, Princeton Review/Random House. Basic overview guide for students interested in varsity college athletics.
- *The Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*, Shane L. Windmeyer. Companion guide to colleges for LGBT students, featuring students' and college administrators' views on LGBT life and issues on college campuses.
- *On Your Own: A College Readiness Guide for Teens with ADHD/LD*, Patricia O. Quinn, Theresa Laurie Maitland, and Bryan Ische. Guide to help teens prepare for college life. Offers self-assessments on problem-solving skills and decision making; communication; and identifying academic and social needs.
- *College Guide for Performing Arts Majors: The Real-World Admission Guide for Dance, Music, and Theater Majors*, Carole J. Everett/Peterson's Guides. Guide to colleges and universities offering visual and performing arts majors.
- *Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different*, Donald Asher. Ten Speed Press. Highlights great colleges and universities for very intelligent students who have hit their academic stride later in their high school careers.

**FINANCIAL AID**

- *The College Board College Cost and Financial Aid Handbook*, The College Board. General, comprehensive guide to college financial aid.
- *Paying for College Without Going Broke*, Kalman Chany/Princeton Review. Strategic guide to applying for need-based financial aid.
- *The College Money Handbook*, Peterson's/Thompson Learning, Inc.
- www.finaid.org—comprehensive guide to need-based and merit-based aid
- www.scholarships.com—scholarship database
- www.fastweb.com—scholarship database
- www.studentaid.ed.gov—Federal financial aid site

**GREAT READINGS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

- *Where You Go Is Not Who You Will Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*, Frank Bruni. Grand Central Publishing. (We love this one and recommend it to all students and their parents/guardians.)
- *The Launching Years: Strategies for Parenting from Senior Year to College Life*, Laura S. Kastner and Jennifer Wyatt. Three Rivers Press. Advice for parents/guardians regarding the transition to college.
- *The Naked Roommate: For Parents Only: A Parent's Guide to the New College Experience: Calling, Not Calling, Packing, Preparing, Problems, Roommates...*, Harlan Cohen. Helpful, witty guide to college life for parents in the modern age.
- *Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding the College Years* (3rd Edition), Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger. Harper Collins. Insight and support for parents and guardians on separating from their students who are leaving home for college.
- *Getting In Without Freaking Out: The Official College Admissions Guide for Overwhelmed Parents*, Arlene Matthews. Three Rivers Press.

**GREAT MISCELLANEOUS READINGS**

- *Less Stress, More Success*, Marilee Jones and Kenneth Ainsburg. American Academy of Pediatrics. From the former dean of admissions at MIT and a pediatrician, a great resource for help with managing your student's stress and anxiety surrounding the college application and admissions process.

- *College Unranked: Ending the College Admissions Frenzy*, Lloyd Thacker. Harvard University Press. Written by the executive director of The Education Conservancy, a 30-year veteran of college admissions, this book explores the importance of educational and personal values in the college process.
- *The Gatekeepers*, Jacques Steinberg. Viking Press. Interesting look at selective college admissions from inside the Wesleyan University admissions office, written by a *New York Times* journalist.
- *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College That is Best for You*, Jay Matthews. Three Rivers Press. Written by a Harvard alum, this book looks at the importance of taking advantage of resources at the college you attend to grow and succeed, rather than resting on your college's name and prestige. The focus is on helping you find a college that fits your individual needs, rather than prestige.
- *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That's Right For You*, Loren Pope. Penguin Books. From the author of *The Colleges That Change Lives*, the ultimate guide to identifying the right college for you.

**WEBSITES**

College websites are one of the most useful sources of information available. Through them, you often can take a virtual tour of the campus, email specific departments or administrators to answer questions, view the entire course catalog and examine curricular information, and learn about student life. Though the colleges typically paint themselves in the best possible light on their own websites, you can still get a clear sense of what the institution values.

**COLLEGE FAIRS, LOCAL INFORMATION SESSIONS, AND COLLEGE VISITS TO MARET**

These are hosted throughout the year. The Washington Area Independent Schools College Fair, co-hosted by several independent schools in the area, is held in late April for juniors and their families. Attending this event is a good way to get information on many schools quickly and to have some of your questions answered by representatives from over 150 colleges and universities from around the country. In addition, the College Counseling Office hosts over 100 college representatives in the fall to meet with interested students. A list of college visits is updated on the Maret school calendar.

**MARET COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE**

Remember, we know a lot about colleges. You can always talk to any of our college counselors about the colleges you are exploring.

**COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES**

(Three or more students accepted over a five-year period)

**American University**

- Amherst College
- Bard College**
- Barnard College**
- Bates College**
- Beloit College**
- Boston College**
- Boston University**
- Bowdoin College**
- Brandeis University**
- Brown University**
- Bryn Mawr College**
- Bucknell University
- Carleton College**
- Carnegie Mellon University**
- Case Western Reserve University**
- Clark University
- Colby College**
- Colgate University**
- College of Charleston**
- College of the Holy Cross
- College of William and Mary**
- Colorado College**
- Columbia University**
- Connecticut College**
- Cornell University**
- Dartmouth College**
- Davidson College**
- Denison University
- DePaul University
- Dickinson College**
- Drew University
- Drexel University**
- Duke University**
- Eckerd College
- Elon University**
- Emory University**
- Fordham University**
- Franklin & Marshall College**
- Georgetown University**
- Gettysburg College**
- Goucher College**
- Grinnell College**
- Hamilton College—NY**
- Hampton University**

**Harvard University**

- Harvey Mudd College**
- Haverford College**
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges**
- Hofstra University
- Howard University
- Indiana University at Bloomington**
- Kenyon College**
- Lafayette College**
- Lake Forest College
- Lehigh University**
- Lewis & Clark College
- Macalester College**
- Maryland Institute College of Art**
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology**
- McDaniel College
- McGill University**
- Miami University, Oxford**
- Michigan State University
- Middlebury College**
- Morehouse College**
- Mount Holyoke College**
- Muhlenberg College**
- New York University**
- Northeastern University**
- Northwestern University**
- Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences**
- Occidental College**
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- Old Dominion University
- Pitzer College**
- Pomona College**
- Princeton University**
- Purdue University**
- Reed College**
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Rhode Island School of Design**
- Rhodes College**
- Rice University**
- Roanoke College**

**Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology**

- Santa Clara University
- Savannah College of Art and Design**
- Scripps College**
- Seton Hill University
- Sewanee: The University of the South**
- Skidmore College**
- Smith College**
- Southern Methodist University**
- Spelman College**
- St. John's University—Queens Campus
- St. Lawrence University
- St. Mary's College of Maryland
- St. Olaf College
- Stanford University**
- Swarthmore College**
- Syracuse University**
- Temple University
- The Catholic University of America
- The College of Wooster**
- The George Washington University**
- The New School—All Divisions**
- The University of Alabama
- The University of Edinburgh**
- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**
- Trinity College**
- Trinity University
- Tufts University**
- Tulane University**
- Union College (New York)**
- University of Aberdeen**
- University of California, Davis**
- University of California, San Diego**
- University of California, Santa Cruz
- University of Chicago**
- University of Colorado at Boulder**

**University of Delaware**

- University of Denver
- University of Glasgow
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Kansas
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- University of Maryland, College Park**
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- University of Miami**
- University of Michigan**
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Puget Sound
- University of Redlands
- University of Richmond**
- University of Rochester**
- University of San Francisco
- University of Southern California**
- University of St Andrews**
- University of Toronto Undergraduate Only**
- University of Vermont**
- University of Virginia**
- University of Wisconsin, Madison**
- Ursinus College
- Vanderbilt University**
- Vassar College**
- Villanova University**
- Washington and Jefferson College**
- Washington College
- Washington University in St. Louis**
- Wellesley College**
- Wesleyan University**
- Wheaton College MA
- Whitman College**
- Williams College**
- Yale University**

(matriculations in bold)

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