

Table of Contents

The College Selection Process	2
College Counseling at Miller School.....	3
The Honor Code.....	3
The College Search.....	4
College Characteristics.....	5
Collecting Information.....	6
The Interview.....	8
College Visit Policy.....	9
Narrowing Your List.....	10
Admission Decision Options.....	11
College Testing.....	13
Applying to College.....	17
The Application.....	15
The Essay.....	20
Recommendations.....	22
Financial Aid and Merit-Based Scholarships.....	23
NCAA.....	26
The College Search Responsibilities at Miller School.....	29
Appendix	30
Sample Resume.....	30
Useful Internet Sites.....	31

THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

Deciding where you will go to college is one of the most important and exciting things you will do while you are a student at Miller School. You may be wondering about your college options and wondering what colleges will want to accept you. The answer is that many colleges will want you as a student. Remember, colleges are recruiting and selecting students just as you are selecting a college. While you may or may not be competitive for every institution, there are many good colleges that will hope to enroll you in their freshman class. So relax and remember that this is one of the great adventures of your life. We have prepared this handbook for you and your parents so that you will know more about how the process works. The college admission process will be easier and more enjoyable if you do the following:

- **Be thoughtful about what you want and need in a college.**
- **Keep an open mind.**
- **Plan ahead!!!**
- **Research your options carefully. No two colleges are exactly alike.**
- **Be attentive to requirements and procedures. They vary from college to college.**

While you may well find a college that is your top choice school, there is no such thing as “the best college” or the “only” college for any student. Given the range of excellent colleges and universities to choose from, you should be able to develop a college list that includes several attractive and compelling institutions that will serve your needs. Your college application list should include institutions that are likely to offer you admission and may include “reach” schools. Carefully and thoughtfully undertaken, the process can and should be fun, productive, and satisfying. However, if you approach the process casually or carelessly, you are likely to be disappointed.

Know Yourself. You have to start here, but this isn’t always easy. Socrates said, “The hardest person to know is thyself.” He also said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Be reflective, think about who you are and what goals you can achieve. Be realistic and don’t sell yourself short. What are your talents and interests? What do you want the four years of college to bring? How hard are you willing to work? How liberal or conservative are you really? How much can your family realistically pay for college? How adventurous are you? Do you want to go far away or close to home?

Believe in Yourself. You have much to offer many colleges. You have had the opportunity to have a splendid high school education. You have wonderful teachers, coaches, administrators, and parents who believe in you. Be confident and excited about who you are. This is a time in life when you need to promote yourself. You will not be perceived as conceited or weird, and self-promotion is a skill that will help you later in life when you apply to graduate school or for a job. Toot your own horn – you deserve the acclaim!

COLLEGE COUNSELING AT MILLER SCHOOL

The College Counseling Office is open and accessible to all students and their parents. The Office's library offers resources to assist students in their college research process. The library includes college catalogs, videos, guidebooks, directories, and computer and web resources. The College Counselor is available for consultation throughout the year and encourages students to begin the exploration process early.

Parents are encouraged to meet with the College Counselor when they come to campus and to telephone or email me with questions whenever I can be of assistance. The College Counselor participates in Parent's Weekends and is available for individual meetings then, as well as throughout the year.

Admissions officers from colleges and universities across the country and Europe visit each year to meet with interested prospective students and the College Counselor. Meeting with these representatives is a good way to learn more about colleges and to allow the visiting admission officers to begin to know interested students.

While we encourage students to take advantage of the resources of the College Counseling Office throughout their time at Miller, the formal college planning process will take place in the following stages:

Sophomore year: The College Counselor meets with small groups of sophomores during the spring semester to talk about the process of researching and visiting colleges and to introduce them to college research resources. The meeting will encourage students to begin the college search and preparation for the application process.

Junior year: In the first semester, juniors will again have the opportunity to meet with the College Counselor in small group settings to continue the discussion about the college selection and admissions process. In the spring semester, each junior will have a college planning meeting with the College Counselor to create a list of colleges to be researched and visited during the spring and summer.

Senior year: In the early fall, seniors will again meet with the College Counselor to finalize a college application list. The College Counseling Office will assist and advise students throughout the application process period and its aftermath.

THE HONOR CODE

The principles of the Honor Code are meant to apply to all aspects of a student's life, and nowhere are they more important than in the college application process. An applicant's character and integrity are important to colleges, and violations of the Honor Code and actions requiring disciplinary action will be judged both by Miller and the college. Any falsification of information on the application or cheating, such as plagiarism on the essay, may seriously jeopardize your chances of acceptance.

Miller School must maintain a relationship of trust and total honesty with colleges if we expect them to believe and to act upon our recommendations about our students. The traditions of this school and the Honor Code tell colleges that you are expected to meet and are capable of meeting a certain standard, and that falling short of such a standard is a serious matter. Your actions reflect your character, and that is part of what colleges examine as they review your application – don't give them any reason to question your integrity!

THE COLLEGE SEARCH

Selecting the right college takes time. Before embarking upon your search, you should be introspective. Asking yourself some important questions will help you prioritize your college criteria. Then you must collect information about colleges. Today, there are innumerable ways of gathering information about schools. While conversations, recommendations and view books offer a rich amount of material, it is vital that you visit the campus to truly gain a sense of belonging. Finally, as you proceed with your search, you should narrow your options, being careful to include three types of schools in your final list: safe, target, and reach.

Know Yourself

Before you jump in the car to visit 10 colleges in four days or pay several hundred dollars for a dozen colleges' application fees, stop and think: what are you looking for in the place you will call home for the next four years?

Goals

- What values are most important to you? What concerns occupy most of your thoughts, time, and energy?
- What people, events, and experiences have been most influential? Why?
- How do you define success? What are some examples of your own success? What would you like to accomplish in the future?
- What types of careers or jobs seem most appealing to you?

Academics

- What are your academic interests? What classes have you enjoyed the most? Which have been the most difficult?
- How do you learn best? Do you prefer lectures or discussions? Do you like to work on projects independently or as a member of a group? Do you prefer writing essays, taking tests, or completing short answer or multiple-choice questions?
- How would you describe your academic experience at Miller?

Activities, Interests and Hobbies

- What extracurricular activities have you enjoyed the most? What activities would you like to continue in college?
- What new activities would you like to begin in college?
- What leadership roles have you taken in school and your community? Think of a time when you have exhibited leadership. Describe the qualities you believe exemplify your leadership style.
- What do you consider your most significant contributions in high school? What are you most proud of?

Developing Your Resume

You can also build a more specific inventory of your experiences during high school by compiling a resume of your activities and interests. Don't let the word "resume" scare you. Think of it as an organized activity list. What matters are its contents. This list should summarize your high school experiences and exhibit all that you have accomplished in three years and be of help as you begin to research colleges and complete applications. **HINT:** Microsoft Word has resume formats that can simplify your writing process. You can find it under "New" in the file toolbar. Then open "other documents" to find a variety of resume templates. An example of a student resume may be found in the appendix.

Trust Yourself

Having reflected on your own preferences and tastes, perhaps revealing some qualities that will be vital for your chosen college to offer, how do you translate that information into a list of schools that best suit your personal preferences? Answer: **TIME** and **RESEARCH**.

COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS

GOOD NEWS: You are not searching for a needle in a haystack. There is no such thing as the "one" school, but rather several or even many appealing colleges that will suit you well. Remember that there are over 3,200 colleges and universities in the country, as well as various international options. The key will be **NARROWING** your **CHOICES**.

Your college choices should match your personal preferences. While each college is different from others, there are some basic characteristics to consider.

Type Two-year/four year. Public or private. Church affiliated or secular.
 Liberal arts college/research university/pre-professional (engineering, business, architecture, education, pre-medical). Coed or single sex.
 Calendar: quarter/semester/year-round/block.

Philosophy	Traditional or experimental. Career-oriented or deeply scholarly. Military.
Size	200-1,000 students. 1,000-5,000 students. 5,000-15,000 students. More than 15,000 students.
Location	Geographic region. Distance from home. Setting: urban, suburban, or rural. Climate: cold, moderate, coastal, mountainous. Recreational/cultural activities nearby. Closest city.
Facilities	Academic: library, classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, computer labs/tech support, language labs, art studios, music practice rooms, writing center, study rooms. Athletic: individual/intramural/varsity facilities, weight room/cardiovascular equipment, athletic fields.
Academic Life	Curriculum: Freshman courses. Core requirements. Majors/minors/dual degree/interdisciplinary programs. Independent study. Research/internship opportunities. Study abroad. Faculty: Student-teacher ratio. Class size ranges. Percentage of faculty with PhDs/number of teaching assistants. Faculty accessibility, e.g. office hours. Freshman and upper class advising systems. Faculty diversity. Atmosphere: Workload requirements. Competition. Students' attitudes towards learning. Exchange of ideas. Academic clubs.
Students	Composition: Male-female ratio. Percentage of students living on campus/commuters. Geographic diversity. International student ratio. Racial/ethnic diversity. Religious diversity. Community: Honor system. Open campus or significant regulations. Diversity of opinions/tolerance of differences. Activities: Prominent campus organizations. Greek system/eating houses. Religious/cultural ethnic organizations. Music/theater/arts/writing organizations and opportunities. Leadership opportunities. Athletic/outdoors clubs.
Affordability	Expenses: Tuition. Room. Board. Student fees. Cost-of-living expenses. Need-based Financial Aid: Need-blind/need aware. Percentage of students receiving aid. Grants. Loans. Federal work-study. Non-need based aid: Academic scholarships. Special talent scholarships. Athletic scholarships.

COLLECTING INFORMATION

Step 1: Cast a wide net. Three words. World Wide Web. Nearly every college in the country maintains its own website, and numerous college guides are available via the

Internet. A list of popular web directories is the appendix to this handbook. Peruse the sites, take the virtual tours, and request printed materials, including an application via the web. Also, review some of the comprehensive college fact books, like *Peterson's* plus some of the more subjective guidebooks like *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*. A bibliography of guidebooks is listed in the appendix of this handbook. In addition, the College Counseling Office maintains a current resource library, including college catalogs and videos.

Step 2: Meet with your college counselor. One of the primary functions of the College Counselor is meeting with you individually to discuss college plans. These meetings will take place beginning in your junior year and continue into your senior year. The College Counselor will assist you as you brainstorm ideas and narrow your list of schools. The Counselor will discuss various colleges' strengths and admission criteria. The Counselor will also help you develop a working list of colleges best suited to your talents and interests.

Step 3: Plan visits. As you develop your primary college list with your counselor, consider visiting each campus. In fact, **PLAN** on visiting each campus. Furthermore, I strongly encourage you to **make an appointment at each destination**. Today, admissions offices like applicants who have "*demonstrated interest*" in their college. There are many ways to do this, one being visiting the admissions office. You never know what you'll find if you simply show up on a campus. Consequently, you may not get a full picture. Colleges often offer the following options for prospective students and parents:

- A student-guided campus tour
- An information session or an interview
- Class visits
- Meeting with a professor or a coach
- Overnight dorm stays
- Performing arts auditions

General advice. While your activities on campus provide you with the means of gaining information, you help dictate the quality of your time spent. Ask questions of the students you meet. Read the student newspaper. Eat in the dining hall. Go to the library and see how it is organized and how technology is integrated. Take a look at the athletic facilities. Tour a dorm room or two. Don't act simply as a tourist; visualize yourself as a student. Do you feel like you would fit in? Some **questions to pose** of your campus hosts may include:

- Why did you select the school?
- Do most students live on campus? Are they on campus on weekends?
- How accessible is the faculty to students?
- What do students do in their free time?
- What are the current campus controversies?

- How close is the campus to local restaurants, shopping centers, movie theaters, etc?
- What is the relationship like between the faculty and student body?
- Do students take their academic seriously? What's the pressure like?
- Do all students have access to the athletic facilities?
- What are the meal plan options? How is the food?
- Are the facilities well-maintained and accessible to students?
- How safe is the campus? Do students feel comfortable walking alone after dark? What sort of safety provisions are in place for dorm residents?
- What are some of the campus traditions?
- How easy is it for freshmen to become involved in activities?
- What activities are the most popular for students?
- What would you change about the school?
- How are freshmen advised? Will I have a peer and faculty adviser?
- What academic support services are available?
- What is the placement record for graduate schools?
- Does the college have an honor code? Is it effective or window-dressing? Do the students support the system?
- How difficult is it to get into the courses I want to take?

Be advised. When you travel to a college campus, you are a guest and should comply with campus regulations. This is especially important to recall when staying overnight on campus. Visitors who violate their privilege will be reported to the admissions office and, in extreme cases, may be invited to leave campus or arrested. Such behavior will torpedo any admissions application.

THE INTERVIEW

Not all colleges require interviews as part of the application process and some don't even offer them, but some are happy to provide them if you want to schedule one. There are several different types of interviews:

- **The on-campus personal interview.** You meet individually with a member of the admissions staff, giving both of you the opportunity to ask and answer questions. Whether or not this interview is used as part of the admissions evaluation, you should treat it as if it is and, thus, make your best impression.
- **The on-campus group interview.** This is purely informational for both your family and for you, and not used as an admissions evaluative tool. The admissions office will share relevant admissions criteria, and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.
- **The off-campus/alumni interview.** A graduate of the college who lives in your hometown usually conducts this interview during the school year. This interview is customarily part of the evaluation process. It will be your responsibility to determine each school's policy about alumni interviews and how to schedule one. The College Counselor will help to facilitate the meeting if necessary.

General Advice: Prepare for your meeting by carefully reading the college's literature. Visit the College Board's site <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/135.html> for useful tips. Be aware of what the institution offers. Arrive early (15 minutes) for the interview and try to relax. At the start, the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. Have some questions prepared in advance – write them out if that is more comfortable. Have a pen and paper to take notes as the interviewer answers your questions. If you go into the interview feeling good about yourself and your talents, you will convey that attitude to the interviewer. She (or he) is not trying to trip you up; she simply wants to get to know you. Be pleasant, and the interview will go smoothly. **Send a prompt thank-you note afterwards. Do not email this note!** This should be on thank you note style stationery. The note should be hand-written, and you should make the note personal, enthusiastic, and brief. The note will help to distinguish you in the interviewer's mind, and will reflect well upon you.

Questions they may ask:

- Why do you think you and this college are right for each other?
- Where else are you applying and why? Which is your first choice?
- What are your academic interests?
- What are your plans for the future?
- What have you liked or disliked about your high school? If you were the principal of your school, what would you change?
- What would you like to tell us about yourself?
- What newspapers and magazines do you read? What books have you read recently? What television shows do you watch?
- Tell us about your family
- What are your favorite hobbies?
- What events in your life have shaped you as a person?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What do you feel about: the needs of the environment? Race relations? The homeless in our society?
- If you could dine with any person – living or deceased, who would it be and why?
- What do you consider your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- What do you want to get out of your college experience?

Finally, before you leave, find out who the admission representative is for Miller. Most colleges assign admissions representatives to geographic areas. This representative will be deeply involved in the review of your application and in the admittance decision. You and your family will find it helpful to communicate with this person throughout the application process.

COLLEGE VISIT POLICY

Visiting a college is the best way to discover whether that college is right for you. Plan to visit colleges whenever you can, but especially in the summer or during vacations, either before or during your senior year. You will find that during the summer,

most admissions offices are well prepared to receive prospective students and parents, and usually have a lively staff of students who conduct tours. Ask these student guides the questions you didn't ask the admissions staff. Because visitor traffic is typically heavy on most campuses during spring break season and during July and August, be sure to call ahead of your visit to schedule an interview, tour, group information session, or other activities.

Seniors are allowed **THREE** excused class days to visit colleges, and they may possibly schedule at fourth college visit day with special permission. Such days away from Miller should be reserved for visits to top college choices or for special invitations from colleges for scholarship competitions, athletic programs, or similar activities. With permission, juniors are allowed to miss one class day in the spring semester to visit colleges. For approval, the college visit must include official contact with the admissions office, in the form of one of the following:

- An interview
- A tour
- An information session
- Class attendance
- Special admission office-sponsored programs

The Director of Student Life, College Counselor, and/or the student's teachers will judge whether the student's academic situation will be adversely affected by missing class. The student should make arrangements for the trip at least one week in advance of departure. *The Miller Student Handbook* explains the standard procedures for a college visit.

NARROWING YOUR LIST

In reading about colleges, listening to others (including yourself), and visiting colleges, you are narrowing the list of colleges which appeal to you. In the fall of your senior year, your college counselor will meet with you to discuss this narrowed list. How long a list should you compile? The answer depends on you and your needs. However, we strongly advise that the list be no longer than eight to ten colleges. We also strongly advise that the list include an array of selectivity. In other words, include **safe, target,** and **reach** schools on that list, **even if you plan to apply early decision somewhere.**

- A **safe school** is one you are nearly certain to be offered admission. They admit students with lower grade averages, fewer rigorous courses, and lower standardized test scores than yours. Provided you do not commit a major mistake, like offending your interviewer, or missing the application deadline, you should feel safe about being admitted to the institution.
- **Target schools** should comprise the bulk of your list. They should closely resemble your own profile in that they admit students with your grade averages, your curriculum profile, and your range of standardized test scores. In general, these schools admit students with similar records to yours and are selective in their admission. While past records indicate similar profiles, your admission is

not guaranteed. Each year's applicant pool differs, and most schools will have more qualified applicants than they do spaces.

- **Reach schools** are the most selective and unpredictable institutions on your list. They admit a small percentage of their applicants, and those they admit have slightly higher grade averages, more rigorous curriculum profiles, and higher standardized test scores than yours. While they are the most difficult schools from which to win admission, you may wish to apply to a couple of schools in this category – you may get in!

Bottom line – This is your journey. Yes, there will be rules and restrictions; however, you are the person left living with the decision in August when you report to your new home for the next four years. Many resources are available to assist, but it is your responsibility to decide how you will take advantage of those resources. Above all, do not apply to a college you do not want to attend.

ADMISSION DECISION OPTIONS

A number of notification options are available to you in the college application process. Although the options vary from college to college, most schools offer several application plans under which you are notified of their decision, sometimes as early as the fall of your senior year. Basic definitions of these different options are as follows:

Early Decision. Early decision is a commitment-based plan for the student who has firmly determined his or her top choice of college by the fall of their senior year. If that school is not a definite first choice, a student should not apply early decision. A student submits an application by a certain date, usually in October or November, and the college notifies the student of their decision, generally by early December. They may accept, defer, or reject the student. If deferred, the application is placed with the regular pool of applicants for consideration in the spring. If accepted, the student is **ethically bound** to attend the institution and to withdraw any other applications immediately. A student may apply to other institutions prior to early decision notification, but may have only one application under early decision consideration at any time and **must be prepared to honor his or her commitment.** Early decision enrollment deposits are usually due in December or January.

Advantages of the plan are that you may finish the application process by mid-December and you will send a strong message of dedication and interest to the admission committee. This commitment can be helpful if you are deferred for it may give you a slight edge over the other applicants in the spring. Be very sure of your choice.

It is not necessarily easier to gain admission under an early decision plan, and at many colleges it is harder. In fact, since senior grade and test scores are very important in the admission process, colleges frequently defer early applicants in order to see how senior grade and test score trends progress. Your early decision application will be judged chiefly upon your academic and extracurricular record through your junior year, the first quarter of the senior year, and SAT and ACT scores taken by October of the senior year. If your application will be strengthened by the work you do in the course of

your senior year, you may wish to apply under regular decision. Keep in mind that most colleges accept the majority of their students from the regular application pool.

If financial aid is essential, it is usually possible to apply for a preliminary financial award or evaluation. If it is not sufficient, you may appeal, or you may sometimes be excused from your early decision contract and allowed to apply elsewhere. If it is important for you to secure financial assistance for college, early decision may not be a wise option. Applying to several colleges under regular decision plans will enable you and your family to better compare a range of financial options. Also, if you are accepted to several schools, you have the ability to bargain with them to increase their aid packages.

Finally, early decision plans have recently come under attack. In 2006-2007, Princeton and the University of Virginia announced they are discontinuing early decision. They argue that such plans favor the affluent and result in fewer socio-economically disadvantaged students being offered admission to their institutions. It is expected that this move away from early decision plans will spread among elite colleges and universities.

Early Action. This plan resembles the early decision plan in most ways, except it is non-binding. A student accepted under early action is not required to make a commitment until May 1, the National Candidates Reply Date. This option allows you to express interest in a college and to receive an earlier admission response while simultaneously exploring other college options. Students are typically admitted or denied under early action, but they may also be deferred to the regular decision cycle.

Regular Decision. Most students follow this plan, through which they file their applications in the fall or early winter of the senior year and are notified of the colleges' decisions in March or April. Application deadlines generally fall in January or February, and if admitted, a student must submit an enrollment deposit by May 1, the National Candidates Reply Date.

Rolling Admission. Some institutions offer this option, in which the admissions office reviews applications as they are received and releases decisions within a few weeks of application receipt. The earlier you apply, the earlier you are notified AND the more likely you are to find a place. Spaces do fill up, so apply early, no matter what the deadline. At some larger public universities, freshmen housing is also assigned on a rolling basis and an earlier acceptance will help you secure dormitory space. Enrollment deposits are typically refundable up to the May 1 National Candidates Reply Date.

Waiting List. A waiting list decision means that an admissions office has neither accepted nor rejected an applicant, but holds out the possibility for admission should space become available. Students are sometimes placed on the waiting list because of a drop in their senior grades (**colleges are attentive to mid-year and even third quarter marks**), or because the college has many more admissible applicants than space. While not yet admitted, the wait-listed student has fared better than the pool of students to whom the college has denied admission.

In some years, the college will admit a large number of people from its waiting list and in other years none or very few, depending on that year's deposit trends. Lists vary greatly from year to year and school to school, and a student can expect to hear about the availability of space as early as the beginning of May or as late as August 1. Most colleges try to give wait-listed students a final decision by early July.

If offered a place on a waiting list, you will probably be asked by the college to inform them whether or not you wish to remain on the list. You should respond to them promptly. It is not appropriate to convey a keen interest in attending the college, if that is not the case. Many students are offered waiting list slots at schools they have decided they do not want to attend. Colleges are glad to know which waitlisted students are truly interested in enrolling.

Since most colleges are not in a position to notify students of their status until after the May 1 Candidates Reply Date, it is important that a waitlisted student submit an enrollment deposit by May 1 to one of the colleges that has offered admission to the student. After May 1, colleges will not accept a deposit if their freshman class has been filled, and it is important that you cover an enrollment option for the fall. If offered admission from the waiting list at your first choice college, it is appropriate to notify the college at which you have deposited that you have made other plans. While the first deposit is probably non-refundable after May 1, it is not unethical to change plans, and your withdrawal may open a space for a waitlisted student at that college.

Colleges routinely expect a number of students to withdraw from the entering class during the summer, and their accounting for that may work to your advantage if you are waitlisted. **Whatever you do, do not deposit at TWO schools. That is unethical, and it can result in both colleges canceling your acceptance.** While you may accept a place on more than one waiting list, you should never hold an enrollment reservation at more than one college at a time.

Be sure to keep the College Counselor apprised of your waitlist and enrollment status. The Counselor is here to help you explore your options and to work through the process.

COLLEGE TESTING

Testing Requirements – Testing requirements vary from college to college. Some accept only the SAT. Many institutions accept the ACT, but not all. Some accept either the SAT or the ACT, many encourage students to submit scores from both tests. An increasing number of colleges make the submission of standardized test results optional. It is important that you be aware of the requirements of each college on your list.

SAT Subject Test requirements vary as well, with some colleges requiring three SAT Subject Tests and others only two SAT Subject Tests. Other institutions welcome SAT Subject Test results but do not require them. Once again **it is your responsibility to research the requirements of each of the colleges to which you apply.** Not meeting

testing requirements – especially when applying to highly selective institutions - may weaken your application in relation to other applicants.

If you are applying under early decision or early action plans, it is especially important that you are aware of testing requirements, especially regarding SAT Subject Tests, mandated by the college. The October (and sometimes November) SAT testing is early enough for scores to be considered in the early plans of many, but not all, institutions.

Registration deadlines are important! Students are required to register for all admission tests ahead of time, and the testing agencies are very strict about registration deadlines, which are well in advance of the testing dates.

- **Special note: While the SAT I and the ACT scores appear on the Miller transcript, students must personally have the SAT Subject Test scores sent to each college to which they are applying. Many colleges require students to have all scores sent directly from the testing agency.**

STANDARDIZED TESTS: There are six types of tests commonly used by colleges and scholarship sponsors to evaluate a candidate's ability and achievement.

PSAT/NMSQT

The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) is used primarily as a practice test to prepare students to take the SAT in the junior and senior years. Miller will administer the PSATs each October for juniors, sophomores, and freshmen. Scored on a scale of 20-80 for the three components of the exam, Critical Reading, Writing, and Math, the PSAT parallels the 200-800 scoring of the SAT. The tests are scaled with mean scores on the SAT of 500 Critical Reading, 500 Writing, and 500 Math. Similarly, parallel mean scores on the PSAT are 50 Critical Reading, 50 Writing, and 50 Math.

National Merit Scholarships and recognition are based on results of the PSAT given in the fall of the student's junior year (also known as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test or the NMSQT). You do **not** get two chances at posting a National Merit score. Students who repeat a year, for example, and take the test officially a second time, will find their scores flagged with an asterisk to indicate their ineligibility for National Merit recognition.

SAT I: REASONING TEST

The current "SAT Reasoning Test" is administered in about 3 hours and 45 minutes and is designed to measure the reasoning abilities developed by students over the course of their schooling and consists of the three aforementioned sections: Math, Writing, and Critical Reading.

- The Critical Reading section of the SAT is made up of four sections, with varying types of questions, including sentence completions and questions about short and long reading passages. Sentence completions generally test the student's vocabulary understanding of sentence structure and organization by requiring the student to select one or two words that best complete a given sentence. The bulk of the Critical Reading questions is made up of questions regarding reading passages, in which students read short excerpts on social sciences, humanities, sciences, or personal narratives and answer questions based on the information they contain. Certain sections contain passages asking the student to compare two related passages; generally, these consist of short reading passages as well as longer passages.
- The Mathematics section of the SAT consists of three scored sections, possibly four if the student's experimental section is a math section. There are two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section. Notably, the SAT has done away with quantitative comparison on the math section, leaving only questions with straightforward symbolic or numerical answers.
- The Writing section of the SAT includes multiple choice questions and a brief essay. The multiple choice questions include error identification questions, sentence improvement questions, and paragraph improvement questions. The essay section, which is always administered as the first section of the test, is 25 minutes long. All essays must be in response to a given prompt. The prompts are broad and often philosophical and are designed to be accessible to students regardless of their educational and social backgrounds.

To learn more about the *Reasoning Test* please visit the College Board's SAT Preparation Center at http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html .

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

These tests (once called the Achievement Tests and recently known as the SAT II) are designed to measure a student's level of achievement in a particular subject, such as English, foreign language, history, mathematics, or science. All Subject Tests are one-hour, multiple-choice tests. However, some of these tests have unique formats. Most, but not all, subject areas have a related SAT Subject Test, and some disciplines offer tests at more than one level. Up to three Subject Tests can be taken on one test date. Certain SAT Subject Tests are offered only on specific dates, and students need to carefully plan their test schedule. We recommend that students take SAT Subject Tests in May or June of the junior year, and in November or December of the senior year. Please visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about/SATII.html> for more information.

Students must closely check SAT Subject Test requirements at each college. Some colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, and others use them for placement. Failure to meet these requirements can place a student at a minor or even a significant disadvantage in the admission process. While some institutions do not require Subject

Tests, a number of colleges require both the writing test and the mathematics test, and many colleges will ask for another test in a specific area.

The College Board offers students a “score choice” option, which allows them to suppress and not report designated SAT Subject Test results to colleges. **All** scores from a given test date are either reported or withheld. Because of this option, Miller does not put SAT Subject Test scores on transcripts and students are responsible for having these scores sent directly to colleges to which they are applying.

ACT (The American College Test)

This battery of tests consists of five parts of general educational development and a special student profile section. The academic tests cover English use, reading, mathematics, and natural science reasoning. The entire battery takes about three hours. Like the SAT, the ACT is given several times a year, including a date in October.

Most colleges throughout the country accept both the ACT and the SAT. Thus, it is sometimes an advantage to take and to send scores from both tests. Many institutions will base an admissions decision on a higher ACT or SAT score when students present both tests and when there is a disparity in scores between the two tests. Please visit <http://www.act.org/aap/> for more information about the ACT.

The PLAN Test

The PLAN Test is the ACT version of the PSAT and will be given to all ninth graders starting in the fall of 2008.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

Colleges usually require students whose native language is not English to take the TOEFL. Because the writing and critical reading portions of the SAT do not always provide an accurate measure of the non-native speaker’s fluency in English or verbal abilities, the TOEFL can provide colleges with a more accurate indication of the student’s command of English. Many colleges require international students to submit a TOEFL score, which is used in addition to the SAT I verbal scores. It is wise to register early for the TOEFL since this area’s test centers tend to fill up quickly. Most colleges will publish the minimum TOEFL score that they require for admission. Please visit http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.fab2360b1645a1de9b3a0779f1751509/?vgnextoid=69c0197a484f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&WT.ac=Redirect_ets.org_to_efl for more information about the test.

Advanced Placement (AP) Tests

Technically speaking, Advanced Placement exams are not a part of college admission, except that colleges are very aware of enrollment in AP classes, and students should be aware that good scores on AP exams earned during the junior year can enhance their admission profile. Exams are given in May and cover the equivalent of college level material in a specific AP course. With the single exception of a language exam for a person raised in the language, these exams require academic preparation much more

extensive than that found in a normal high school course. The exams are graded on a scale of 1 to 5. While placement and credit policies vary from college to college, scores of 4 and 5 - and sometimes 3, can earn a student advanced college credit and/or placement. Miller does not put AP exams on our transcripts. Students are responsible for sending these scores to colleges. More can be learned about the AP Exam at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html> .

Testing With Accommodations

The SAT I and the ACT are offered in different forms to accommodate students with learning differences or disabilities. Students who qualify for these tests may take them with extended time, given on tape, or even read to the student by a special proctor. Special tests may be desirable and they are often taken in addition to standard, timed tests.

How colleges look at extended time tests, which are clearly designated with an asterisk on the student's test record, varies from school to school. Colleges and universities do not deny admission solely because of a learning disability. However, institutions admit students who predict success in their academic programs and who fit parameters of institutional selectivity.

At many institutions, there are no special tracks or special programs for students with learning disabilities. Other colleges offer extensive programs and accommodations. Sometimes a college will have a special committee that will review a student's application in order to determine whether the student can do the work at that institution. They look for compensatory skills and evidence that such skills support the student's ability to do college-level work in the areas that the college will require of them. Admission committees will consider a student's academic record at Miller School to be the most important predictor of the student's success in college.

Taking Non-standard Tests. In order for a student to be eligible for an extended time on the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Test, or the ACT, he or she must have on file a signed document supporting the need for special testing. This document must be obtained from child-study teams, psychologists, physicians, or learning disability specialists and should be based on educational testing done within three years of the date of taking the extended time test. Miller's Coordinator of Educational Support Services (the College Counselor) must also submit a statement to the testing agency indicating that the same accommodations are made here for the student.

To register for a non-standard test, the student's documentation should be on file with the Miller Registrar by August 1. If a student needs only extended time (50% more) for the test, he or she may take the SAT I at the regular test site. However, if a student qualifies for 100% extended time, it is necessary to make arrangements with the Registrar.

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

THE APPLICATION

Step 1 – Decide upon your final list of colleges; then write, telephone, or email the admissions offices and ask each for admissions literature and an application. Nearly all colleges and universities now have applications and other information on line. Check the individual college's web page or <http://www.collegeboard.com> for more up-to-date information.

The Common Application. While each college has its own specific application for admission, a consortium of more than 200 private colleges publishes and accepts the Common Application. The advantage to this application is that you complete only one form and write one essay and send copies to multiple colleges. The limitation is that you can only use the Common Application with participating schools. If you plan to apply to two or more schools that accept the Common Application, using that form is an efficient way to complete your application. Participating colleges will consider the Common Application exactly the same as their own.

If you are using the Common Application, it is still important that you secure and review each college's admission material for information about special programs or procedures and sometimes for additional forms (such as the institution's financial aid application). Many colleges will send you a supplementary form if you use the Common Application. It is **imperative** that you return that form in order to complete your application. These supplements can sometimes be found on a college's website. The Common Application is available in the College Counseling Office at the beginning of each school year and may also be secured on the web at www.commonapp.org.

Step 2 – Check over each application carefully when it arrives in order to get a sense of what you will have to do to complete your application during the fall. You should be looking for;

- **The Application Deadline** – You want to submit the application to the college at least one month **before** that date. It is better to send in applications with **rolling admission** deadlines as soon as possible because enrollment and housing spaces can fill quickly.
- **Testing Requirements** – These vary from college to college, and it is important that you carefully plan to meet the requirements of each school on your list. Most colleges accept both the SAT and the ACT. Some require specific SAT Subject Test results, while other colleges encourage but do not require SAT Subject Tests. If applying early to a college, it may be imperative that you plan to take SAT Subject Tests or repeat the SAT I in October of the senior year.
- **Recommendations** – How many recommendations do your colleges ask for? You will want to ask teachers to write letters for you well before November 15th.
- **Interviews** – Are interviews required, advised, or unnecessary? Schedule them early if they are required or helpful. Most Ivy League schools, as well as other selective institutions, will schedule alumni/ae interviews after you have applied. It is very important that students make these appointments. It is essential to have

an interview and visit if the college recommends such actions. Because college interview calendars often fill up days and even weeks in advance, it is good to schedule interviews earlier rather than later in the admissions process cycle.

- **Financial Aid** – Check for deadlines and any applications the college may need other than the **FAFSA** or **CCS Profile**. FAFSA and the CCS Profile are described later in this Handbook. Deadlines, procedures, and policies vary greatly from college to college.
- **Essays** – Some applicants don't require an essay; some call for two or three. Make sure you know how much time will be involved in each application. If several of your colleges accept the Common Application, one essay may suffice for several applications.

Step 3 – Ask for teacher recommendations well in advance of deadlines, and definitely no later than Thanksgiving. Try to request all recommendations at once. It is important that you treat teachers, administrators, and staff who help you with the application process with the utmost courtesy. Give them long lead times; provide them with stamps, addressed envelopes, due dates, and your resume sheet. Write them thank you notes, and be appreciative that they are taking time out of their hectic days to help you.

Step 4 – **Make copies of the applications after you have completed the process to keep as a record.** Mail can get lost, so copies can be very helpful. No one enjoys “reinventing the wheel.” MOST IMPORTANT: make your application neat and readable. Some people prefer to type the application; others will hand print theirs; some will file an application on a disk, and some will apply via the Internet. In any case, the application should be carefully filled out and presentable. If it cannot be read, it will not help you win admission.

Step 5 – Begin writing your essays or essay. Rewrite, then proofread carefully and make both electronic and hard copies. Have the College Counselor and a teacher critique your work. These should be drafted with the utmost care and represent your very best work.

Step 6 – Request transcripts from the College Counseling Office by completing the Transcript Request Form. **Without your written permission, Miller cannot and will not send your transcript** (see the deadline calendar).

Step 7 – When finished, check over your applications to be sure that everything is signed, that all parts are included except for the transcript and the recommendations, and **that you have a CHECK for the application fee**. Applications with no check are sometimes put in the “no check” file, delaying consideration. **Mail the applications at least one month before the deadline!** Remember to keep a copy in case yours is lost in the mail.

Deadlines are Important

Make sure you know your college admissions deadlines. Colleges expect applicants to comply with their procedures. Applications received late may be automatically rejected, receive less than priority consideration, or be put on the waiting list. Some institutions will simply return to sender all applications received after the deadline date. Don't preclude a college option by missing a deadline date! Make sure you finish all of your applications before you leave for Christmas Vacation.

In order to get their work done by the decision notification date, admission officers begin reading applications well before the filing deadline. Submitting your applications earlier in the cycle will enable admission offices to process your file, notify you if anything is missing, and prepare your file for evaluation. Applications that arrive at or after the deadline are processed later (if at all) and during a more hectic time in an admission office. Later applicants are often not notified as quickly of missing items because of the "crush" of paper and processing at that time of year.

Keep in mind that there are deadlines for requesting transcripts from the College Counseling Office as well, which ensure that we will have your transcript and counselor recommendations ready to meet college deadlines.

<u>Application Due to College</u>	<u>Request Transcript By</u>
October 15	September 15
November 1	October 1
November 15	October 15
December 1	November 1
December 15	November 15
January 1-15	November 15
All other deadlines	January 10

Incomplete Applications. If you submit Part I of a two-part application, and decide not to complete the rest of it, notify both the college involved and the College Counseling Office. Not doing so causes the college unnecessary inconvenience and expense. The same holds true if you decide to withdraw an application. Do it as soon and as politely as possible. Notify College Counseling if you did not apply to a college after requesting that we send your transcript. **In order to keep track of the applications that you have filed, and in order to work with college admission offices in an informal and effective manner, we need to know the status of each of your applications.**

Class Rank. As is the procedure at many independent schools, except for determining valedictory honors at graduation, Miller does not rank its students because of the competitive and rigorous nature of our college preparatory program and the relatively small graduating classes. However, we do send each college a school profile from which colleges will be able to understand our grading system, curriculum, rigor, and the competitive nature of the school. The College Counselor's letters describe distinctive aspects of Miller's grading scale and programs. Such information will help most colleges understand and evaluate our transcripts without inclusion of class rank.

THE ESSAY

There are college applications which do not require essays or writing samples. Most colleges, however, want a little more, and are going to ask you to describe your life experiences, hopes and dreams, personality, achievements, and reasons for selecting their college. This is an opportunity to be your own cheerleader. In most cases, the essay is the only direct contact you will have with the admission committee of the college, so you want to present yourself well. The essay can and does shift the balance of the admission decision, for or against you.

Read That Paragraph Again! At most institutions, the essay is reviewed as an example of your writing style and ability as both a part of determining your potential for success at the college and as a means of comparing applicants. A well-written essay may enhance your chance of admission, while a shabbily written writing sample can clearly diminish your chance. Students can be denied admission to a college on the basis of a careless, indifferent essay. Remember: thousands of students just like you, with similar talents, backgrounds, and experiences, are trying to answer the same question in their essays. Do your very best!

Writing the Essay: Your application essay gives you a chance to display enthusiasm, intelligence, leadership, talent, maturity, writing style, and originality. If you make a self-conscious effort at writing a “deeply meaningful” essay, you may not succeed. Be yourself and tell your story. Many of the skills that are required in preparing solid, polished, imaginative essays are taught in English and history classes.

Think of the essay as an opportunity to introduce your personality, the things that make you unique and interesting. It is a vehicle for describing your accomplishments, goals, and keenest interests. If you have a good sense of humor, let that shine through... Write about how you spent a summer helping your little sister learn to play basketball, if that experience was important to you. Write about creating your own fishing flies or learning to rock climb. If you have regularly done volunteer work, talk about that experience. For example, helping handicapped children learn how to ski or snowboard. Describe a “disaster” that you survived while working your first job. You can reveal as much about your resourcefulness that way, as you can by describing a fear that you overcame. An essay about how you spent some time in another person’s shoes and learned to see the world differently can be effective. Many things you have experienced or accomplished can become good essays.

A LIST OF DO’S & DON’T’S

- Write clearly and in your own style or “voice.”
- Reveal something about yourself.
- Respond to the question asked or topic proposed on the application
- Be attentive to the organization of the essay; develop your in a logical sequential way.

- Also be attentive to spelling and grammar. Don't forget to use "spellchecker", but remember that it doesn't find all mistakes.
- Clearly introduce your topic, develop it, and logically conclude your essay
- Don't digress or ramble.
- Give yourself plenty of time to write your application essays. Start with a rough draft that you revise until you are comfortable with it. Do not try to write essays the night before the application deadline!
- Many colleges invite students to optionally submit a graded writing sample. Keep copies of well-written graded work that illustrates your writing ability and academic potential.
- It may be possible to use an essay for more than one application. However, if one essay topic doesn't adequately address the essay question of another application, don't use it. The admission officers reading your file will think you've missed the point of their question or that you have responded in a careless fashion.
- Don't write in a pretentious or stilted style.
- Don't attempt obscure or offbeat humor that may be misunderstood by the reader.
- Don't use generalizations. Write clearly and substantiate your point of view with specific examples.
- Don't make the essay too long or too short. Most applications stipulate a suggested length, so follow the instructions. At the same time, it is usually appropriate to submit all or part of an essay on attached sheets of paper.
- Handwritten essays are often hard to read. Use a word processor and make sure that your final product can be read. Proofread for errors. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference a keyboard error and poor grammar or spelling. Don't give your reader undue reason to question your ability to express yourself in writing.
- Don't toss the essay off. Be careful, and take pains with it. It says something about you, and that should be worth your concentration and energy.

Remember! Once again the honor code prevails. Plagiarism on an essay can result in the rejection of an applicant, withdrawal of an offer of admission, or expulsion from the college after enrollment.

Auditions, Tapes, Portfolios: If you are a musician, a photographer, an artist, or an athlete, colleges often are interested in seeing samples of your work in addition to an essay. Some colleges will require a portfolio or an audition. Many colleges and universities welcome the submission of optional materials as supplements to the application. Others will not make use of such materials. Admission materials will usually give you an idea of what optional materials are appropriate. Don't overdo it; admissions officers don't have time to watch a 20-minute videotape or read through long supplementary submissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most colleges require at least one or two teacher recommendations, and some want them from specific teachers, such as your junior-year English instructor. Above all

it is essential to find someone who knows you well and has knowledge of your accomplishments, character, and potential. A teacher, adviser, or coach may be in position to write about you in a detailed and evaluative fashion. Some colleges request peer recommendations, which should be written by a friend who can write a balanced and fair assessment of your abilities and qualities. Character recommendations, usually written by family, friends, alumni, or prominent and influential people are good, only if the person knows you well. Letters from people, who know your parents but don't know you, won't do you justice or carry much weight with an admission committee; a letter from an employer or internship supervisor will mean more to an admissions office.

Give each person you ask a fair chance to decline your request for a recommendation. Someone may feel that he or she is not in a position to write you a good, well-informed recommendation. Provide the writer with the recommendation form from the application, an information sheet detailing your activities and interests, and a **stamped, addressed envelope. Make sure that you request the recommendations well in advance of all deadlines, and definitely before Thanksgiving.** You may request additional copies later, but faculty members have no obligation to accept a new request after Thanksgiving. Just remember that all of your classmates are asking for recommendations at the same time as you. Be thoughtful, be organized, and be grateful. **Some institutions require that all recommendations go in the same packet as your application, so read the instructions carefully!**

Confidentiality and Waivers. Because of federal laws involving rights of access, most college recommendation forms give you an opportunity to sign a release, waiving your rights to see the recommendations. Unless you have strong, personal reasons against it, you are encouraged to sign the waiver. Often a teacher will not feel free to write an honest, fair, and flattering recommendation if there is a chance that you will see the letter. Additionally, an applicants chances of seeing teacher recommendations is slim because most colleges have a policy of destroying teacher recommendations after the admissions decision has been made, thus guaranteeing confidentiality.

FINANCIAL AID and MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

Given the considerable variation in cost from one college to another, students and parents should determine the financial parameters, if any that will guide and determine the final college choice. Colleges and universities offer a wide variety of financial assistance options, ranging from need-based financial aid to purely merit-based scholarships, to low and no-cost payment and loan programs. These programs may be desired for students both on and not on need-based financial aid. Because financial aid and scholarship programs, application procedures, and filing deadlines vary considerably from institution to institution, students need to carefully research the aid options offered by each of the colleges they are considering.

Not included in the cost outline of most colleges are “miscellaneous” costs which vary greatly between colleges. At one school, a student ID card may provide access to all

activities, while at another school, the ID may only be a license to buy tickets. It is important to talk with students and admissions officers about out-of-pocket expenses when you visit a college. At one college, \$150 a month may cover all incidental expenses, while at another, \$100 a week may not be sufficient. Fraternity and sorority fees and off-campus housing costs at schools that offer limited on-campus housing can add considerable extra expense to four years of college.

The cost of a college education may be reduced in many ways. A student's summer earnings are often a good source of spending money. On-campus jobs, athletic scholarships, and ROTC programs also help a student cover college expenses. Colleges generally include a work-study job as part of a need-based financial aid package and include a summer earnings expectation in the financial package. Many companies have educational support programs for the children of employees.

All families who are interested in applying for financial aid should review each college's admission materials for information on financial aid options and application procedures. While some colleges require submission of their own financial aid form, almost all colleges require submission of one of either *FAFSA (Fee Application for Federal Student Aid)* or the *CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE*. Many colleges accept either form. **If a student's family is not sure whether or not they will qualify for need-based aid, the student should apply for aid. Something may be available.**

FAFSA. *The Fee Application for Federal Student Aid* gives access to loans and college work-study and is used as the primary financial aid application by many colleges. This form is processed without charge and should be filed as soon as possible after January 1st. Revised by Congress each year, it is available in the College Counseling Office in December for use during that year's admission cycle. Male students over 18 years of age must register with the Selective Service to be eligible for federal financial aid. The easiest method to register is to mark "Yes" to question #28 on the FAFSA form and FAFSA will register for you. If you are 17 and mark "Yes", you will be automatically registered when you turn 18.

CSS/Financial Aid Profile. The Profile is a supplemental aid application required by many colleges in addition to their own institutional form. Administered by the College Scholarship Service of the College Board, students must pay a \$6.00 Profile Registration Fee as well as a processing fee of \$15 for each college aid application. The College Board accepts registrations beginning in September. Registration via the Internet (www.collegeboard.com) is the quickest and easiest way to accomplish this task. The Profile should be filled out early in the application cycle, in accordance with the colleges' financial aid application, as soon as college choices are known.

Facts to Remember

Many sources of money are available to a student. Sometimes financial aid packages involve a combination of these sources. Often the scholarship is just that – a grant of money with no strings attached, except for good performance in all courses.

Sometimes a student's scholarship given by an outside source will reduce the school's financial aid offer. Whereas, at another school, outside aid does not impact how much aid the school awards to the student.

Merit-based and special scholarships – Some students may find other additional sources of income. Athletes and other exceptionally talented students may receive packages with as much as full costs plus allowances. Some colleges offer straight merit scholarships, based on SAT scores and academic average, and special talents and accomplishments. These may involve anything from the total package covered by a Morehead Scholarship at UNC, or a Jefferson Scholarship at UVA, down to a modest increment of \$500. While some scholarships are awarded unsolicited by the college (sometimes as a recruitment initiative), many scholarships require nomination by the student's school, or by alumni or other organizations.

Often, highly competitive merit-based scholarship programs require students to submit a special application. Such applications frequently include essays, which can play a major role in the scholarship award process. On-campus interviews are also often a part of the final round in merit-based scholarship competitions. Consult college admission literature or websites for information about special scholarship opportunities and application requirements.

Need-based scholarships – Usually awarded by the college based on the **FAFSA** or **Profile**.

In-state tuition for out-of-state students – These are usually tied to a specific program or a merit-based scholarship. Check with individual colleges regarding such policies.

Grants (federal, state, private) – Supplemental Opportunity Grants and Pell Grants are federal programs. Many states offer tuition assistance grants to students attending private colleges within their state. In Virginia the grant is called "T.A.G."

Student loans – Guaranteed student loans made directly to parents for undergraduate education, usually have a low rate of interest until graduation, and then become regular loans. Federally subsidized student loans have deferral options for students who are attending graduate school and very manageable repayment schedules.

Tuition assistance programs – There are a variety of tuition assistance programs under which parents may make college payments in increments rather than in one or two lump sums. Monthly payment programs, with and without interest are administered by private organizations and by many colleges and universities. Many colleges allow pre-payment of tuition, to be returned to the family should the student enroll. In some cases, such a program includes a fixed cost guarantee.

Co-op programs – Many colleges, particularly engineering schools, have programs that allow a student to spend one or a series of semesters away from school working for a firm in a job usually related to the student's major. The benefits from such a program are

many: these jobs are paid, which help meet some (or all) expenses; on-the job experience makes you a more attractive candidate for employment after graduation; work semesters break up the study routine of college and may make you a more effective student upon return, and you may receive a job offer from one of your employers.

ROTC – Many scholarship opportunities are available through Army, Air Force, Marine, and Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps. A student who is thinking of a career in the military or who wants leadership experience should consider applying. Information is available in the College Counseling Office.

On-campus employment – Most colleges have a regular job pool for students who are both on and not on financial aid. Most aid packages require the student to earn some money during the school year and, in most cases, the experience is beneficial to the student. Working as a physics lab assistant, for example, would be valuable experience for a physics major.

Summer employment – Summer jobs can serve many purposes. Students who want special training or exposure find that working for the National Park Service, on Capitol Hill, for a local lawyer, business person, or for some industry or hospital can provide both experience and background on which to base career decisions. Such jobs can also enhance your post-graduate plans. If you qualify for need-based financial aid from a college, they will typically budget around \$1,500 from summer work in their calculation of an aid package.

NCAA

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is the governing body for more than 1200 colleges and universities' athletic programs. One major division of this organization manages collegiate recruitment and eligibility for prospective student athletes. In fact, the NCAA has very specific regulations which colleges and students must follow to pursue a collegiate athletic career in either Division I or II programs. For comprehensive information from the NCAA, go to <http://www.ncaa.org/eligibility> .

Recruitment

Talented student-athletes may become sought-after college prospects. College coaches and team representatives recruit many athletes in a variety of ways throughout the latter years of high school, including visiting camps, writing letters, calling students, inviting athletes to visit their campuses, and attending high school competitions. The NCAA carefully regulates athletic recruitment, particularly Division I and II programs.

General Regulations for Division I and II Athletics

- You (or your family) may not receive any gift or arrangement such as cash, clothing, cars, transportation, or loans to persuade you to sign a National Letter of Intent to attend a NCAA regulated college.
- Letters from coaches, faculty members, and students are prohibited until September 1 of your junior year.

Telephone Calls

- Telephone calls from faculty members and coaches are prohibited until July 1 after completion of your junior year. After this, in sports other than football, a college coach or faculty member is limited to one telephone call per week to you or your parents.
- You (or your parents) may telephone a coach at your expense as frequently as you may desire.

Personal Contact

- A college coach may contact you in person off the college campus only on or after July 1 after completion of your junior year.
- Coaches may contact you off the college campus no more than three times (football is an exception). However, he or she may visit your high school one day per week during the contact period.
- Any direct meeting between a college coach and you (or your parents), during which any of you speak longer than the greeting “hello”, is considered contact. Also, any prearranged meeting that occurs at your high school or competition or practice site is a contact, regardless of the conversation.

Official Visits

- You are allowed one expense paid, i.e. “official” visit to a particular college campus during your senior year.
- You may travel on no more than five official visits.
- Before an official visit, you must provide the host institution with a copy of your PSAT, SAT or ACT test scores. Division I recruits must also provide a copy of their transcript.

Contacting a Coach

It makes good sense to contact coaches as you make your college plans. If you know the coaches name, address a letter to him or her. If you don't know the coach's name, find the information by contacting the admissions office or by visiting the college's website. Create a data sheet about yourself and your experience in that sport and send it to the coach. Be prepared to provide a videotape of your athletic performance to each coach. Also, when you visit the campus, try to schedule a meeting with the coach.

Be advised: If you hope to play Division I sports, be very careful of assuming that all that the coaches tell you is accurate. They are contacting athletes all over the country, trying to make sure that they have all possible candidates. They know that they are not interested in all candidates. Furthermore, coaches may not be in full communication with the admissions office, and may encourage students who fall outside the admission parameters. It is your responsibility to follow several leads and understand the admissions criteria. Work with your coaches here and with the College Counselor to manage both the recruitment and the admissions process. It is wise to file an application regardless of what the college's athletic department can do. **Do not assume anything until you sign.** Every year someone is disappointed because of the difference between rhetoric and reality.

Eligibility

To compete for a Division I or II athletic team, the NCAA must first deem you an academically eligible player. This applies to all prospective student-athletes, including those who plan to walk-on and try out once they arrive on campus, nor simply recruited athletes.

- Students who wish to play Division I must meet minimum SAT/ACT scores and grades. The exact scores/grades are based on a sliding scale. For example, a student who has a 2.2 on a 4.0 scale must have a combined score of 940 on the SAT I Math and Critical Reading sections, while an 820 SAT score needs a 2.5 GPA.
- If a student intends to play at a Division II school, he or she must have a 2.0 GPA and a minimum score of 820 on the SAT I combined Math and Critical Reading sections.
- For school-year 2007-2008, both divisions require 16 core academic courses. For more information on these requirements, please visit:
http://www1.ncaa.org/membership/membership_svcs/eligibility-recruiting/faqs/initialeligibility.html

The Clearinghouse

In order to pursue a Division I or II athletic career, you must register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse during high school. The Clearinghouse will review your transcript and test scores to ensure that you have fulfilled basic academic requirements for either Division I or Division II programs. The eligibility requirements for the divisions differ. To register with the Clearinghouse:

- Obtain a copy of the NCAA publication, "Making Sure You Are Eligible to Participate in College Sports" from the College Counseling Office or directly from the NCAA at http://www.ncaa.org/library/general/transfer_guide/2006-07/2006-07_transfer_guide.pdf
- Following the completion of junior year, complete the **Student Release Form**, also available in the College Counseling Office.

- Students must submit two copies of the form to the guidance offices of each school they attended in high school.
- The schools will submit the completed form, including a copy of your transcript to the Clearinghouse.
- There is a **\$27** processing fee to the Clearinghouse. Fee waivers are available.
- You must also have your test scores sent to the Clearinghouse as soon as possible. You may include the NCAA code 9999 on your test registration form for direct submission, or contact the Clearinghouse for additional forms.

Be Advised: gaining clearance from the NCAA in no way corresponds to admissions decisions.

THE COLLEGE SEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES AT MILLER SCHOOL

College Counseling Office

1. Meets with students in small group settings beginning in the 10th grade through the senior year.
2. Meets with students individually beginning in the 2nd semester of their junior year to help clarify student list of colleges.
3. Communicates with Senior Advisors about the progress of their advisees.
4. Coordinates on-campus visits of representatives from colleges.
5. Provides updated resource materials for student use.
6. Coordinates registration for SAT/ACT Testing.
7. Coordinates outside SAT prep course if desired.
8. Completes the Secondary School Report form for each senior, including the school recommendation.
9. Completes the NCAA Clearinghouse forms for recruited athletes.
10. Sends school transcript along with the Secondary School Report and teacher recommendations to schools listed on each senior's Transcript Request Form... Makes sure each student's application materials have arrived and are complete.
11. When appropriate, helps to appeal to College Admission Directors regarding their decisions on Miller applicants.

Registrar's Office

1. Helps to coordinate on-campus visits of college admissions office representatives.
2. Coordinates PSAT and PLAN Testing for 9th, 10th, and 11th graders with the Director of Academics.
3. Coordinates AP Exams with the Director of Academics.
4. Generates GPAs and Transcripts.
5. Works with Miller's Educational Support Services to identify students with Individualized Educational Programs (I.E.P.s), and accommodations for national testing.

Students and Parents – You Must Do Your Part Too!

1. Research, discuss, and prepare an initial list of colleges that are suitable academically, socially, and financially.
2. Plan and make college visits and keep the College Counselor updated – see section on college leaves/parental permission.
3. Notify the College Counselor by September 15, if the student is applying to a college as an early decision candidate.
4. Make a list of all due dates for all of their college material.
5. Complete the Transcript Request Form for the College Counselor and the Registrar.
6. Request applications from college.
7. Request teacher recommendations prior to September the 30th of senior year – see section on teacher recommendations.
8. Complete either paper applications, or “on-line” applications to all colleges being considered. In both cases, students/parents are responsible for providing application fees to each school, using personal check or credit card , and for posting sending the applications.
9. Send all of their SAT Reasoning Test (or ACT) & SAT Subject Test scores to their colleges through the Educational Testing Service.
10. Make copies of either paper or electronic applications for College Counselor’s use in talking with colleges.
11. Provide College Counselor’s Office with letters of acceptance or rejection for student folders.
12. Send the required deposit and “post-acceptance forms’ directly to the college the student will attend.

APPENDIX

Sample Resume

Maxwell Pierce Hensley
107 Sandy Ridge Road Waynesboro VA 22980
(9-12)The Miller School of Albemarle- 1000 Samuel Miller Loop Charlottesville VA 22901
Home Phone: (540)943-9384 Email: Metal_man1936@hotmail.com

College Application Resume

-Academics

- National Honor Society (10-12)- Vice-Resident (12)
- Disciplinary Review board (9-12)-Student Chair (12)
- Placement on National Spanish Exam Level 4 (11)
- Participation in Chemistry Olympiad 2006 (11)
- Honor Roll: 90% average and above list(10)
- AP Calculus AB (12)

- Honors Chemistry (11)
- AP English Language and Literature (12)
- AP English Language and Composition (11)
- AP United States History (11)
- Spanish Club (9,12)- President (12)
- Central Virginia Envirothon Participant 2006 (11-12)

-Sports

- Junior Varsity baseball (9-10)
 - ~Coaches Award 2005 (10)
 - ~Team Captain (10)
- Varsity Baseball (9-11)
 - ~Most Improved Player 2006 (11)
 - ~Honorable Mention All-State and All-Conference Division III 2006 (11)
 - State Champions Division III 2006
- Varsity Cross Country (9-12)
 - ~Team co-Captain (11-12)
 - ~Most Improved Player 2003 (9)
 - ~Most Valuable Player 2004 (10)
 - ~Most Valuable Player 2005 (11)
 - ~All-Central Virginia Cross Country Honors- Fall 2004- *Ragged Mountain Poll*
 - ~Foot Locker All South Team 2003 in Charlotte NC (9)
 - ~2nd Place, all conference, in Virginia Independent Conference 2003 (9)
 - ~6th Place, all conference, in Virginia Independent Conference 2005 (11)
 - ~6th Place, all conference, in Virginia Independent Conference 2006 (12)
 - ~18th Place, VISAA(Virginia Independent School Athletics Association) All-State 2004 (10)
 - ~8th Place, VISAA All-State 2005 (11)
 - ~8th Place, VISAA All-State 2006 (12)
- Conditioning/ Weight Training (9,10,12)
 - ~Most Valuable Player 2005 (10)

-Community

- Motorcycle safety course at *Hugh K. Cassell Elementary*, Career Day 2005(11)
- Martha Jefferson Hospital Service Group; (12); 2-3 hours/week
- Library Service (10,12): two hours per week
 - ~Ada Gilbert Bowers Memorial Library award 2005 *–for best use of library facilities*
- “Legacy” Outreach to elders Pilot program (11) *–We worked personally with an elder, writing a biography based from their life stories, conversations, and activities that we experienced throughout the year.* Two hours per week
- Full time summer employment at local Power Sports Dealership, Wayne Cycle Shop Inc.(9-11) Forty hours per week. Part time employment (12) Four hours on Saturdays.
- Full time summer employment at The Miller School (12) Forty hours per week

Sample Resume II

PERRY JAMESON

1515 Stanley Drive #62
Hometown, KS 66202

OBJECTIVE

To obtain knowledge of the day-to-day workings of a communications, public relations, or publishing firm through a part-time job or summer internship.

EDUCATION

Completed three years at Hometown High School.
Graduation date: May 2005.
G.P.A. 3.85. Top 5% of class.

EXPERIENCE

Newspaper Staff Member, Hometown High School

- **Aug 2004 - present.** Features editor of campus newspaper.
- **Aug 2001 - Aug 2004.** Researched information for news articles using library and Web sources. Composed and edited informational articles, columns, editorials, and advertising copy.

Yearbook Committee Member, Hometown High School

- **Aug 2004 - present.** Editor-in-chief of yearbook staff. Leader of design and publication teams from initial layout through finished product.
- **Aug 2003 - Aug 2004.** Yearbook staff member. Experience taking photographs, designing layout, and writing captions and sidebars.

RELEVANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES

Technical writing; advanced composition; debate; video production; computer classes providing knowledge of word processing, desktop publishing, and Web software.

HONORS, AWARDS, AND MEMBERSHIPS

- **U.S. Media Association Scholarship recipient**
Scholarship based on academic achievement, community service, and campus participation and leadership in high school communications projects and studies.
- **2004 Best High School Newspaper Design winner**
Central State Regional Communications Contest, sponsored by the Communications Department, State University.
- **President of high school chapter of Future Communicators of America (FCA), 2004 - present**
Member, 2003 - present.
- **Treasurer of National Honor Society, 2004 - present**

INTERNET SITES TO EXPLORE

COLLEGE SEARCHES AND SEARCHES AND ADMISSION INFORMATION

http://www.cfnc.org/static/pdf/home/sc/pdf/CollegePlanAcronymDir.pdf	American College Entrance Directory
http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp	College Search – find colleges by major, location, & type
http://www.pureadvice.com/	College Searches & More
http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex_brief.php	America’s Best Colleges 2007
http://www.collegequest.com/	Find the right college for your needs
http://www.universities.com/	A good college search engine
http://www.princetonreview.com/home.asp	Search schools, improve SATs, financial aid info, and more
http://www.collegeview.com/	College View for a general overview of the application and financial aid process, and information on over 3,000 schools
http://www.collegenet.com	Search for information about colleges
http://www.collegequest.com/	Another college search engine

<http://www.embark.com/>
<http://www.nacacnet.org/MemberPortal/>
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare/index.html>
<http://www.tericollegeaccess.org/>
<http://www.gocollege.com/>
<http://www.petersons.com/>

On-line applications and college planning resources
 National Asso. Of College Admission Counseling – a handbook for parents and students
 Dept. of Education parents resource book
 Assistance with planning & paying for college
 School search, virtual tours (online guidebook)
 Search & overviews

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

<http://www.weapply.com/>
<http://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/default.aspx>
<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/apply/acememb.asp>
<http://www.applyweb.com/aw>

Good site for info on financial aid, scholarships, grants, and more
 Common Application (online application to download for Common Application affiliated colleges)
 Online applications for over 700 schools
 Online applications, Directions & Information. After You Apply. List Application Choices · Review Your Activity

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

<http://www.finaid.org/>
<http://www.fastweb.com/>
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CIP1>
<http://www.scholaraid.com/>
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship/index.shtml>

The most comprehensive financial aid site
 Financial aid and scholarship search – updated daily
 FAFSA online
 College is Possible is a web site run by the American Council on Education to motivate children from under-served communities to attend college
 local, state, and national scholarships
 A Federal Trade Commission site to warn parents of fraudulent scholarship opportunities

TEST PREPARATION

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/testprep/testprep.asp?TPRPAGE=1&TYPE=NEW-SAT-HOME>
<http://www.kaplan.com/>
<http://www.learnlrc.com/>
<http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/index.html>
http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html

The Princeton Review's SAT prep site
 Kaplan course information
 Site for Georgetown Learning Centers SAT prep course
 ACT preparation
 SAT preparation

GUIDEBOOKS

http://campuslife.collegeprowler.com/the_buzz.asp
http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel/code/searches/srchCrit1.asp?path=ug.fas.college&WT.srch=1&WT.mc_id=37&mc_r=180
<http://www.fiskeguide.com/>

Reviews written by students for students
 Search & compare over 2,100 colleges
 An indispensable source of information for college-bound students and their parents.