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INTRODUCTION

The mission of Sacred Heart-Griffin High School is “Academic Excellence in a Community of Faith”. A vital aspect of our mission is the academic preparedness of our students to meet the educational challenges of their future. Simply stated, our goal is to prepare our students for college and beyond.

One of the most significant decisions a high school student will make is where he/she will attend college. This decision will set the course for a person’s lifetime. The college selection process is often an arduous one, and the staff of the Office of Guidance and Counseling of Sacred Heart-Griffin is committed to providing useful information to students and parents to facilitate this process.

This College Planning Guide has been developed to assist students and parents in making college-related decisions. Topics in this guide include admissions criteria, time lines, test scores, scholarships, financial aid, and much more.

The college selection process is actually searching for a match between the student’s abilities, aspirations, and preferences and a school which provides for the needs of the student. There are many variables which influence college selection including cost, location, number of students, availability of desired major, campus life, and selectivity. This College Planning Guide is designed to guide students and parents through the process. However, this publication is not intended to be a substitute for the personal advice, mentoring, and relationship between our guidance counselors and students. We are dedicated to personally assisting in this important process.

COLLEGE PLANNING TIME LINE - 8TH GRADE AND FRESHMAN YEAR

Welcome to Sacred Heart-Griffin High School! As an incoming freshman, you are beginning the college planning process. Before you begin your education at SHG, you will take an entrance placement test which helps us determine what classes will best meet your academic needs. Proper course selection is extremely important to ensure a “good fit” for you with your academics and extracurricular activities. It is our hope that this “good fit” will give you much success during your time at SHG.

Freshman year is the initial step in determining your cumulative grade point average (GPA) and class rank. Your cumulative GPA, class rank, and high school course selection will be three of the most important factors for admission to your college choice.

In the fall of your freshman year, you will take a standardized achievement test that measures your academic progress. The results of this test will be a useful guideline for us in planning for you for the next four years. In the spring of each year, your counselor, teachers and parents will work closely with you to create a course schedule that satisfies your educational goals.

8th Grade Year

- Take the EXPLORE placement test for SHG.
- Attend a registration meeting to review results with the counselors.
- Meet with your high school counselor to register for classes for next year.

Freshman Year

- Participate in volunteer and extracurricular activities.
- Take the standardized achievement test in the fall.
- Begin to identify aptitudes and narrow interests.
- Explore careers of interest and determine the best high school curriculum.

COLLEGE PLANNING TIME LINE - SOPHOMORE YEAR

At the beginning of sophomore year, college may seem far off. However, the grades you earn in your sophomore year will help determine your chances of being accepted to the college(s) of your choice when you engage in the application process as a senior.

If you are not satisfied with the grades you earned in your freshman year, you should make an extra effort to do well in your classes and to improve your GPA. Your cumulative GPA is one of the main things that colleges will consider when reviewing your college application. Cumulative GPAs are the average of all of the semester grades you have earned/will earn during your time in high school. Thus, it is important every year that you make the effort to earn the best possible grades you can.

If you are satisfied with the grades you earned in your freshman year and you feel they are an accurate portrayal of your abilities as a student, continue to keep up the good work and concentrate on maintaining and improving your grades. However, do not become lazy or cut back on the effort you put forth academically. If you do so, your cumulative GPA may suffer and you may have to work extra hard to bring your GPA back up to where you want it.

Sophomore Year

- Take the PLAN.
- Continue to explore careers of interest.
- Continue to work on improving grades.
- Select junior year classes with career and college goals in mind.
- Explore the possibility of a college or university summer program.
- Continue volunteer and extracurricular activities.

COLLEGE PLANNING TIME LINE - JUNIOR YEAR

Junior year is a critical year in the college planning and selection process. You will be an active participant in this process. During this year, you will take the ACT and/or SAT. You should also begin to contact the colleges you may be interested in attending. There are several resources available to you in your college search. It is important to be in close contact with your guidance counselor so he/she can show you these resources and help direct you in this important process. The ultimate goal is to find the best college match for you based on your abilities, interests, and aspirations.

Junior Year

Ongoing Activities

- Research colleges and universities using college web sites.
- Attend open houses and college visit programs hosted by colleges and universities.
- Meet with college representatives visiting SHG.
- Continue volunteer and extracurricular activities.

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT at SHG.
- Attend the Capital Area Education Fair. (Opportunity for juniors and seniors to meet with a variety of college reps.)

December

- Start reviewing for the ACT/SAT or consider signing up for a review class.

February

- Select classes for senior year, keeping in mind that colleges will look at your senior schedule. The courses selected should be comparable to the first three years.
- Consider and plan college visits for Easter break.
- Register for the March SAT and/or the April ACT.
- Explore the possibility of attending a college or university summer program.
- Complete a scholarship search on the web: fastweb.com, wiredscholar.com and collegezone.com are recommended sites.

COLLEGE PLANNING TIME LINE - SENIOR YEAR

It's finally here, your senior year! Senior year is the culmination of all of your college planning. Now is the time to narrow your list of colleges and apply to your top college choices. In addition, you should begin to apply for scholarships that would be most applicable to you. If necessary, you should re-take the ACT and/or SAT.

Senior year is an exciting and memorable time for most students. However, it is important to remember that doing well academically continues to be essential. Colleges place a strong emphasis on senior year course selection and on your performance in these classes. All colleges request a student's final transcript to ensure that all requirements were met and that your academic work ethic continued the whole year.

Senior Year

Ongoing Activities

- Continue search and application process for scholarships.
- Continue volunteer and extracurricular activities.

August

- Complete a scholarship search if you have not already done so.
- Register for the September ACT, if necessary.
- Review career plans and decide what college major you want to pursue.
- Narrow down your college list. Five is a good number.

September

- Request applications or download from college web sites.
- Finalize fall college visits. Consider an overnight campus stay.
- Register for the October ACT, if needed.

- Register for the October or November SAT I or II, if necessary.

- ACT test is offered.
- Meet with college representatives visiting SHG.

October

- Visit college campuses.
- Prepare a resume highlighting your academic, extracurricular, work, and volunteer activities to give to those writing letters of recommendation for you.
- SAT I and II tests are offered.
- ACT test is offered.
- Attend the Capital Area Education Fair.
- Begin application process. If applying online, notify your counselor so a transcript can be sent.
- Register for December SAT I and II and/or ACT, if necessary.
- Meet with college representatives visiting SHG.

November

- Make campus visits.
- SAT I and II tests are offered.
- Continue the college application process (watch the deadlines!).

December

- SAT I and II tests are offered.
- ACT test is offered.
- Complete college applications.
- Continue applying for scholarships.

January

- Complete the FAFSA online or by mail after January 1st.
- Have 7th semester grades sent to colleges if needed.

February/March/April

- Evaluate offers of admission.
- Consider making one last tour of college campuses if you are still undecided.
- Send in required deposits.
- Send thank-you notes for scholarships to those who wrote recommendations or to admission counselors who were particularly helpful.

May

- Make your final college decision by May 1st.
- Have final transcript sent to your college of choice. (You will be asked to provide this information in late April or early May.)
- Notify the colleges whose offers of admission you are declining.
- **GRADUATION - Best of Luck to You!!**

COLLEGE SELECTION CRITERIA

Beginning your college search may seem overwhelming. When considering a college, it is important to choose a college that will not only meet your educational goals but one that will be an overall “good fit” for you. You should consider a college where you will feel most comfortable based on your interests and personal goals. The following is a list of items that you may want to consider as you begin your college search:

General Factors to Consider:

- Admissions criteria
- Admission notification process
- Application deadline
- Course offerings and availability
- Core requirements
- Extracurricular activities (athletics, clubs, etc.)
- Financial aid availability
- Four-year attrition rate
- Geographic location
- Graduation rate
- Housing options
- School mission
- Student/faculty relations
- Student population (gender, cultural, academic)
- Support services
- Variety of majors, pre-professional programs

Other Factors to Consider:

- Academic atmosphere
- Advanced Placement (AP) credit
- Career counseling availability
- Career placement rate
- Cars on campus and transportation options
- Computer access, availability, and facilities
- Fraternities and sororities (presence or lack of presence)
- Library access and facilities
- Personal counseling services
- Religious affiliation, facilities, and groups
- Requirements of student behavior
- Study abroad programs
- Study facilities
- Undergraduate research
- Work-study options

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

A college application is a reflection of a student's achievements during high school. Some colleges make admission decisions solely on the basis of objective data such as class rank and an ACT/SAT score. Other schools also look at more subjective data such as letters of recommendation and personal essays. Below is a list of variables that colleges evaluate as they make their admission decisions.

Admission Criteria

- Grade point average
- Class rank
- Score on ACT/SAT
- Strength of schedule
- Letters of recommendation
- Extracurricular activities
- Personal essays
- Interviews

Although colleges differ on the relative importance given to each of the criteria listed above, most schools look at cumulative GPA, class rank, and scores on ACT or SAT as being very important in their selection decisions.

Transcript/Strength of Schedule

The high school transcript is primary in the evaluation of college applicants. The transcript provides a record of a student's semester grades in all courses taken. The transcript also contains a cumulative GPA, class rank, and scores from standardized tests such as the ACT, SAT, and PLAN. These test scores can be blocked out upon parent request. College admission committees evaluate the academic strength of a high school by means of a school profile which is included with each application.

The strength of a student's schedule is evaluated in the admissions decision process. Selective colleges want to see if a student selected the most rigorous courses available. Also, consistencies in performance and trends in grades are noted.

Grade Point Average

The transcript records a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA). The GPA is the average of a student's semester grades. Sacred Heart-Griffin calculates GPAs on a 4.0 scale: A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0. In honors courses A=5.0; in modified courses A=3.0. GPAs can be reported as "weighted" to reflect different grade weights corresponding to the different levels of classes, or they can be reported as "unweighted" where all grades are computed on a 4.0 scale.

Colleges usually consider a student's GPA and curriculum to be the most important criteria for admission.

Class Rank

Class rank is based upon a student's GPA. The student with the highest GPA in the class is ranked number one, the student with the second highest GPA is ranked number two, and so on. A weighted class rank and an unweighted class rank are reported on the transcript. Students can report either class rank.

Colleges admission committees look at class rank when evaluating an application. Some state schools have distinct criteria when it comes to class rank. Typically, class rank and the score on the ACT/SAT are looked at simultaneously in admission decisions. Students with higher class ranks can have lower test scores for some colleges. The reverse is also true – students with higher test scores do not necessarily have to have high class ranks at some colleges. Many colleges use class rank and/or test scores as a standard in awarding scholarships.

Test Scores

The American College Test (ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) are the two college entrance exams that students have an option to take for college admission. Most colleges accept scores from either test. It is impossible to know for sure if a student will perform higher on an ACT or SAT unless a student takes both and compares the scores. Students are encouraged to take the exams during junior year so that they can retake the exam if the scores are not as high as their goal. These tests can be retaken as many times as a student wants. However, it is not typical for scores to rise significantly. Colleges generally only consider the highest scores obtained on any one test. Students can access the Office of Guidance and Counseling to obtain registration packets for the ACT and SAT. Students may also register online: ACT www.act.org or SAT www.collegeboard.com. The ACT is given at Sacred Heart-Griffin in April and June. The test is offered at other sites in Springfield throughout the year. The SAT is not given at SHG but is given at other sites in Springfield.

ACT-

Beginning with the April, 2005 exam, ACT will add a writing section. This test is in addition to the regular ACT. Please check with the colleges and universities to determine if the writing sample will be required or recommended.

SAT-

Beginning with the March, 2005 exam, SAT is adding a 25-minute writing section to its test. It will be scored from 200 to 800 as are the other two SAT test sections. This test section replaces the SAT II Writing test and is a required section of the exam.

SELECTIVE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Admission to highly selective schools has become more difficult with each passing year. Every year, well-qualified students are denied admission to the most selective schools. It has become nearly impossible to predict the decision of admission committees. Many books, articles, and essays have been written to try to give some insight into the process.

The goals of the most prestigious schools remain the same. They strive to create a class of students who are bright and can bring something unusual to the school. Some, but not all, of the criteria used are: personal, geographic, and ethnic diversity. Following are some more criteria.:

- The high school transcript is very important. Grades and class rank have relevance in the college admission process, as well as the selection of courses. Highly selective colleges want students to take the most rigorous course pattern possible. Schools like to see students stretch themselves by taking Advanced Placement courses whenever possible.
- A student's transcript is also a determining factor. The transcript is evaluated to see if the student finishes high school in an upward trend.
- Extracurricular activities can influence the college admissions process. Your activities should demonstrate your ability to take a leadership role. Colleges are looking for a strong commitment to the activities that the student has chosen.
- Highly selective schools place great emphasis on test scores. Both the ACT and the SAT I and II are used to make the decision. A student should take both tests as the formats are very different. Students sometime find that they perform better on one test than on the other.
- Essays can make the difference between acceptance and rejection. This is the time that the candidate can demonstrate not only his/her written skills but also give the admission committee the opportunity to have added insight into the candidate.
- Recommendations are a significant part of the college application process. They often give a different perspective about the candidate and can strengthen an application. The student should give the teacher enough time and information to write a thoughtful recommendation, by including a resume of pertinent information.

The above criteria have different weight assigned to them dependent upon the school. The most important thing to remember is to meet all deadlines in a timely manner and to give the entire process enough time and energy to present yourself in the best possible manner.

COUNSELOR/TEACHER LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Colleges generally indicate if letters of recommendation are required to be submitted in their application process. There is often a specific form included for the teacher and the counselor to complete. Students applying to highly selective schools need at least one letter. Students whose rank is in the lower half of the class should also include a letter of recommendation with their applications.

Choose teachers who have had you in an academic subject – English, Math, Social Studies, Science, or Foreign Language – during your junior or senior year. Some applications require letters from specific disciplines. Club moderators or coaches may be asked to write supplemental letters.

Get to know your counselor. The counselor letter is an integral part of your application packet. Make an appointment early in the year to review your college plans and to discuss your resume.

It is important that college admission committees have a complete picture of you. Your resume should include your current rank and grade point average. In addition, you should include a list of the activities in which you have participated, leadership positions you have held, community service in which you have been involved, and any honors or awards you have received.

Please give teachers and counselors three weeks to complete recommendations. A copy of your resume should be given to the person you are asking to write for you.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Make an appointment with your counselor early in the senior year.

Decide early in your senior year where you will apply. Some applications are available in the counseling office. Others can be obtained:

- from admissions representatives visiting SHG
- at the Capital Area Education Fair
- by contacting the college/university admissions office
- by requesting one when you visit a campus
- by downloading an application from the college/university web site
- by using the Common Application - standard application some universities use for admission
- by applying online

Complete the application early. Make a copy for your records. Be sure to sign the application. When complete, turn the application in to your counselor, along with the application fee if one is required. At that time you will be required to sign a transcript release form. Your counselor will forward the information to the school you requested.

If applying online, see your counselor to request that a transcript be sent.

If a teacher recommendation is required, give him/her a copy of your resume and any form needed. Give the teacher three weeks to write the recommendation.

If a counselor recommendation is required, schedule an appointment with your counselor before he/she writes the letter. Be sure to make your request at least three weeks before the deadline.

The first three (3) transcripts will be sent for free. There is a \$3.00 fee for each transcript after the third. **PLEASE NOTE:** No transcripts will be sent the second semester if senior bills are not up to date.

Once you have made your final decision on the college/university, have your official ACT/SAT score sent to the college/university you plan to attend. You need not do this until you have made a final decision, as the test scores are on the high school transcript.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

The ability to pay for college is a common concern among most students and parents. However, there are several resources available to students and parents to help fund your education after high school. These resources include federal aid, state aid, scholarships, loans and work-study programs.

Every student who has applied for admission to a particular school should also apply for financial aid. Some families perceive that they will not be eligible for aid because their family income is too high. This is not always true. Family income is only one criterion on which financial aid is based. The first step in the financial aid process is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in January of your senior year. The FAFSA is available on-line or through the Office of Guidance and Counseling. Information from your FAFSA is used to conduct a need analysis which determines the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Your financial need is based on the total cost of attendance at a particular college minus your EFC. The EFC remains the same for every college regardless of the actual cost of attendance. Once your financial need is determined, this information is forwarded to the colleges you requested.

Sources of Financial Aid

Federal Pell Grants - These grants help pay for educational costs and require no repayment.

Monetary Award Program (MAP) - These state funded grants help pay for educational costs and require no repayment.

Federal Direct Loans - Loans provided by the federal government to students at a lower interest rate. These loans require repayment with a variety of repayment options available.

- **Perkins Loans** - Federal need based loan available to students. Interest is subsidized (paid by the government) while the student is in school.
- **Stafford Loans** - Federal need based and non-need based loan. Interest is either subsidized or unsubsidized, depending on need.

Scholarships - Requirements for scholarships vary from academic performance, financial need, and merit based. Most scholarships are renewable if criteria for performance is met.

Federal Work Study - Eligible students work part-time while attending classes at least half-time, generally in career-related jobs.

SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

How can you tell a legitimate program from a scam? According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), there are six phrases commonly used to lure in unwitting parents and students:

- This scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.
- You can't get this information anywhere else.
- May I have your credit card/bank account number to hold this scholarship for you?
- We'll do all the work.
- The scholarship will cost some money.
- You've been selected by a "national foundation" to receive a scholarship. For just a small handling fee, we can send you the check.

In general, be wary of scholarships with an application fee, scholarship matching services who guarantee success, advance-fee loan scams, and sales pitches disguised as financial aid "seminars".

For complete information about scholarship scams, go to the Federal Trade Commission's web site www.ftc.gov.

For free scholarship searches on the Web, we recommend www.fastweb.com or www.wiredscholar.com. You do not have to wait until senior year to begin your search for scholarships.

THE COLLEGE BOUND ATHLETE

- There are over 19,000 high schools in the United States.
- There are over 5.5 million participants in high school athletics.
- Two percent of high school athletes are contacted by a college coach.
- Five percent of high school athletes actually participate in college athletics.
- Less than 0.5% of high school athletes receive an athletic grant from a college.

If you intend to participate in sports during your college career, the following information will be helpful to you. The first thing to keep in mind is that scholarships, whether full or partial, are extremely hard to obtain. The second thing to remember is that you need to be proactive in securing a scholarship or even the opportunity to be part of a college team. Start early in your high school career and enlist the aid of your coaches, parents, and guidance counselors.

Beginning your freshman year, you should construct a resume with all of your athletic achievements. This is an important tool that can be used for contacting schools and coaches. Include your cumulative grade point average and any academic honors you have received. The purpose of the resume is to put you in as favorable a light as possible. Include a cover letter with your resume that will tell coaches who you are and why you are interested in their school. Either your coach or your guidance counselor can help you with this. Work with your coach and parents to identify a list of possible colleges and universities. Look at all divisions. Consult your guidance counselor with your list of possibilities to ensure that you are aware of the academic qualifications for each institution. Your counselor will also be able to help you understand the complexities of the eligibility requirements.

There are three associations that govern the majority of intercollegiate athletics: the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). The NCAA governs three different levels of intercollegiate sports: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Division I schools are the most athletically competitive. Division I and II schools offer athletic scholarships. Division III schools may not offer athletic scholarships; however, your coach or counselor could be very instrumental in helping you apply for grants. Colleges in the NAIA are generally smaller in size, and some are very competitive, but they do offer generous scholarships. The NJCAA oversees competition among two-year colleges.

In order to be eligible to participate in Division I or II athletics, students must register with and be certified as a qualifier by the NCAA Clearinghouse. This agency was set up by the NCAA to ensure that prospective student-athletes meet a minimum academic standard.

Students should register with the Clearinghouse after six semesters of high school (end of junior year). To register, follow the directions on the Clearinghouse website: www.act.org/ncaa. It is also necessary to have official ACT/SAT scores sent directly from the testing agency and an official transcript sent by the high school. In addition, if your student athlete commits to an athletic program at a Division I or Division II college/university, it is imperative that a final

transcript be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse. Contact the SHG Guidance Department upon graduation as well as following up with the Clearinghouse prior to the beginning of the student's fall semester of college to ensure that they have been cleared for participation.

Division I and II (2005) minimum requirements include:

- Graduation from high school
- Successful completion of a core curriculum of at least 14 academic units:
 - 4 years of English
 - 2 years of math (Algebra I and higher)
 - 2 years of social science
 - 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of laboratory science)
 - 1 additional year in English, math, or science
 - 3 years of additional courses (foreign language, nondoctrinal religion, English, math, science, or social studies)
- Meet index eligibility (i.e., core GPA and SAT or ACT score)
Also, the Division I initial-eligibility index, or sliding scale has changed. Please consult Guidance or the website at www.ncaa.org or www.ncaaclearinghouse.net for more information. For Division II there is no sliding scale. The minimum core grade-point average is 2.00. The minimum SAT score is 820 and the minimum ACT sum score is 68.

The following is a list of web sites which may be useful to you:

- NCAA [**www.ncaa.org**](http://www.ncaa.org)
 - NCAA Clearinghouse www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
 - NAIA [**www.naia.org**](http://www.naia.org)
-

COLLEGE TESTING

PLAN - A practice test for the ACT that provides an estimated ACT composite score range as well as information to assist students with their career and college major planning. Students take the PLAN in the fall of their sophomore year.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) - A practice test for the SAT which is also used to determine National Merit Semifinals. Students take the PSAT in the fall of their junior year.

ACT (American College Test) - A college entrance exam that is generally taken during junior and/or senior year.

SAT I (Scholastic Aptitude Test) - A college entrance exam that is generally taken during junior and/or senior year.

SAT II (Subject Tests) - One-hour tests that measure a student's knowledge in specific subject areas. These tests are required by some of the more selective colleges and may be taken by freshman through senior year high school students.

AP Tests (Advanced Placement) - Tests that are taken upon the completion of an advanced placement course. A student may gain college credit depending on their performance on the tests.

143965 - SHG'S HIGH SCHOOL CODE FOR ALL TESTING

What is the difference between the ACT and the SAT I?

- **How they are scored**

The ACT has four sections: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. You are given a score (1-36) for each test, as well as a composite score (1-36). There is no penalty for guessing on the ACT, and therefore, no answers should be left blank.

The SAT has two sections: Verbal and Math. You are given a score (200-800) for each section. The two scores are added together, with 1600 being the highest possible score. There is a penalty for wrong answers on the SAT, so unless you are able to make an "educated guess" by eliminating one or more of the answer choices, you should leave the question(s) blank.

- **How the test scores are reported**

When you register for either test, you have the option of having your score sent directly to the colleges of your choice, or you may choose not to send scores to colleges until you have seen your results first. With the ACT, you can choose which scores you would like to have sent to the college(s); however, with the SAT, *all* scores are sent to the college(s).

Both the ACT and the SAT provide test preparation on their web sites (ACT www.act.org ; SAT www.collegeboard.com). In addition, there are four basic options for test preparation:

- the free booklet distributed by ACT and SAT that is part of the registration packet
- test preparation manuals
- computer software
- classes or individual tutoring

Please note: The SAT I is planning a format change that will take effect Spring 2005. There will be four major changes to the SAT I:

- There will be three sections to the new SAT: critical reading, writing, and math. Each section will have scores ranging from 200 to 800, with the highest possible combined score of 2400.
- The verbal section will be renamed the “SAT Critical Reading Exam” and will no longer include analogies. In addition to the existing long reading sections, short reading sections will be added.
- The “SAT Writing Exam” will be added as a new section to the SAT and will include a short essay composition as well as grammar questions.
- Algebra II material will be added to the existing Algebra I and Geometry material on the Mathematics test.

HELPFUL INTERNET SITES

College Testing:

ACT www.act.org
SAT www.collegeboard.com

SHG Homepage:

www.shg.org

Test Preparation:

www.review.com
www.kaplan.com
www.petersons.com
www.learnatest.com/LearningExpressLibrary

Athletics:

www.ncaa.org
www.naia.org
www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Financial Aid:

FAFSA online www.fafsa.ed.gov
US Department of Education www.students.gov or www.ed.gov
The Student Guide to Financial Aid studentaid.ed.gov
Illinois Student Assistance Commission www.collegezone.com
The Financial Aid Information Page www.finaid.org
Educational Funding www.salliemae.com
Black Excel: The College Help Network www.blackExcel.org
Hispanic Scholarship Fund www.hsf.net

Scholarships:

www.lunch-money.com
www.fastweb.com
www.freschinfo.com
www.srnexpress.com
www.scholarships.com
www.petersons.com/finaid/

Applying to/Selecting Colleges:

www.schoolsintheusa.com
www.collegeexpress.com
www.gocollege.com
www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cc
www.mycollegeguide.org

Info on Various Aspects of College:

www.collegeview.com www.allaboutcollege.com
www.collegenet.com www.collegeparents.org
www.naca.org www.collegeispossible.org
www.privatecolleges.com
www.supercollege.com
www.campustours.com
www.ecampustours.com

College Major/Career Info:

www.careerkey.org
www.wisemantech.com/guidance/careerspecific.htm
www.ksu.edu/acic/career/options.html
www.prenhall.com/success/MajorExp/index.html
www.bls.gov/oco/
www.jobweb.org
www.employmentguide.com/

GLOSSARY

- Accreditation** - Recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies.
- ACT** - The American College Test is a standardized test that examines English, Reading, Math and Science Reasoning. The scores are reported by subject areas and combined into a composite score. Almost all colleges require a standardized test either the Act or SAT.
- Aid Package** - A combination of aid determined by a college financial aid office. It can include a scholarship, grant, loan, or work.
- AP** - These are advanced placement courses that cover the subject area at a more accelerated pace. The courses also deal with more in-depth subject matter. Students take the AP exam in each subject in May. Many colleges and universities will award college credit with a score of 4 or 5 (occasionally a 3).
- Award Letter** - A letter telling you what financial aid (if any) your college is offering to you (includes types and amounts of aid offered, specific program information, etc.). You may choose to accept some or all of what is offered.
- Candidate's Reply Date** - The policy that permits students to wait until May 1 to select the school they will attend.
- CEEB Code** - The code that is given to each high school in the nation. The code for SHG is **143965. YOU WILL NEED TO KNOW THIS NUMBER.**
- Common Application** - An application that is accepted by many colleges and universities. It asks very general questions and also has a general essay question. Once the application is filled out, it can be duplicated and sent to any of the colleges that use the common application.
- Deferred** - An Early Decision/Early Action admissions decision, meaning the school would like to wait and look at your application in the regular decision pool.
- Deferred Admission** - Delaying attendance at the college or university where the student is admitted for one year.
- Early Action** - A program that admits students to a college early without a binding contract, different than early decision, described below. The decision is made usually before Christmas. The candidate is not committed to enroll.
- Early Decision** - Used by elite colleges and universities. This is a legal and binding contract between the student and the college that, if accepted, the student must attend that college. The only exception is if the college is not able to meet the financial obligation. Also, the student must withdraw all applications to other colleges. This should only be used if the student is absolutely sure about the college.
- Expected Family Contribution** - Amount students and their family are expected to contribute toward cost of attendance.
- FAFSA** - Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This is explained in the financial aid section of this booklet in greater detail.
- Geographic Desirability** - The term that is often used by admission counselors to increase the representation of students from all areas of the United States.
- Grade Point Average** - A student's overall scholastic performance. The GPA is computed by multiplying the number of grade points earned in each course times the number of course hours/credit hours, then dividing the sum by the total number of course hours/credit hours.

- Honors Program** - A program for gifted students to earn credit by taking courses offered by a special division within the college or university. Usually extra counseling, small classes, and special library privileges are part of the program.
- Need-Blind** - Admission offices that do not use a student's financial profile when making an admission decision.
- On-Line Applications** - Many colleges and universities are now offering the possibility of applying on-line. In fact, many schools now waive the admission fee if one does apply on-line. Be certain to check at the college or university as to which method the admission office prefers.
- Pell Grants** - The largest and most common college federal program. It also is explained in-depth in the financial aid section.
- Reach School** - A college or university for which the student has borderline credentials for admission. However, applying is certainly worth a chance as the admission committee often changes its criteria for acceptance.
- Retention Rate** - The percentage of freshmen who return after freshman year. A high rate indicates contentment on the part of first year students.
- Rolling Admission** - The admission policy that reviews completed applications as they are received. The decision is sent shortly after applications are received. This type of admission decision is usually employed by larger universities. More selective schools often do not notify students until April 1st with a response date of May 1st.
- SAR (Student Aid Report)** - The information you will receive approximately 3-6 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. It will report the information from your application and, if there are no questions or problems with your application, your SAR will report your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).
- SAT I** - Another standardized test, the Scholastic Aptitude Test. It is a standardized test that examines a student's verbal and quantitative preparation and reasoning skills. This test is used by more selective colleges and universities.
- SAT II** - These are the subject tests given by the College Board that were previously referred to as achievement tests. The more selective schools require students to take at least three tests, usually one in math, one in English, and one of your choosing. It is recommended that you take each test as you finish a course, while the material is fresh in your mind.
- Safety School** - A school or university to which your counselor has advised you that you are almost certainly guaranteed admission.
- Stafford Loans** - Government loans for students who are attending college part time.
- Transcript** - The official record of high school or college courses and grades, generally required as part of the college application.
- Virtual Tours** - The opportunity for the student and family to experience a college tour in the comfort of your home.
- Waiting List - Wait Listed** - Used for private schools or more selective universities. It indicates that if room becomes available, the school is willing to admit you. However, there is no guarantee that the school will use its wait list, so it is important to make plans to attend another school. Sometimes students do not clear the wait list until the last moment. This will cause you to lose your deposit at another school and possibly more funds which are not refundable.
- Work Study** - This is often part of the financial package whereby a student must work at some campus job. The job can be in the admission office, food service, etc.

