

The Guiding Corner



November 2008

Feeling Overwhelmed?

Volume 1, Issue 2

Follow these steps to make the college going process easier:

- Register for the SAT/ACT if you have not done so already
- Ask your counselor for at least one application to complete by November 15th
- Ask two teachers to write you a recommendation letter
- Write and have your English teacher review your personal statement to send with your applications
- Mail your completed applications by December 15th
- Meet with College Admission Counselors that visit your school so they can put a face to the name if the application when you apply.
- Use a calendar to help you stay organized
- Ask for help when you need it. Your teachers and counselor to support you. That is what they are here to do.



Take mini steps to get to the goal of graduation

Special points of interest:

- ✓ College Application Process
- ✓ Scholarships
- ✓ The Job Board
- ✓ Early Decision vs. Early Action
- ✓ Test Anxiety

Inside this issue:

College Application	2
College Essay	2
College Essay Cont.	2
Early Decision	3
Test Anxiety	3
Job Postings	4
Scholarships	4

Have you said these excuses to your self about why you should not go to college?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. "I can't go to college-- nobody in my family has ever gone?" | where I want to go." | and teachers you're wrong! |
| 2. "I've been in school for twelve years. That's enough! I just want a good job." | 5. "I can't go to college-- I don't know what I want to do with my life." | College is a chance for you to learn more about who you are as a person and find a career that you will love. |
| 3. "I can't go to college because I can't afford it." | 6. "I can't go to college because I just won't fit in." | |
| 4. "I can't go to college-- I don't know how to apply or | 7. "College is too hard for me." | |
| | If you have said these excuses to your friends, family | |

Early Decision vs. Early Action

Early decision plans are binding—a student who is accepted as an ED applicant must attend the college. Early action plans are nonbinding—students receive an early response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until the normal reply date of May 1. Counselors need to make sure that students understand this key distinction between the two plans: binding is binding.

About 400 colleges have early decision or early action plans, and some have both. Some colleges offer a nonbinding option called **single-choice early action**, under which applicants may not apply ED or EA to any other college.

ED plans have come under fire recently as unfair to students from families with low incomes. In 2002 both Stanford and Yale universities replaced their binding early admissions programs with nonbinding early action plans. And in 2006, Harvard College eliminated its early application program entirely, giving all applicants the same deadline, "in large part because of concerns that early admission provides an unfair advantage to applicants from privileged backgrounds," according to the *Harvard Crimson*.

Seniors must complete three college applications and turn them in to Guidance by December 15th!

The College Essay

There are typically three types of essay questions: the "**you**" question, the "**why us**" question, and the "**creative**" question. The following descriptions and tips are based on information found in McGinty's book.

The "you" question

This question boils down to "**Tell us about yourself.**" The school wants to know the student better and to see how she will introduce herself.

Example: "UVM values a diverse student body. What contributions might you make to our campus community outside of academic achievement?" (University of Vermont, 2005)

Plus: This type of direct question offers students a chance to reveal something about themselves other than grades and test scores.

Danger: The open-ended nature of these questions can lead to an essay

that's all over the place.

The "why us" question

Some schools ask for an essay about a student's choice of a school or career. They're looking for information about the applicant's goals, and about how serious his or her commitment is to this particular school.

Example: "How did you become interested in American University?"

The College Essay Cont.

(American University, 2007)

Plus: This type of question provides a focus for the essay; that is, why the student chose this particular school or path—and the answer to that will (hopefully) be clear to her.

Danger: Any factual errors in the essay will reveal that the student really hasn't thought deeply about her choice. For example, writing that she wants to at-

tend Carleton College to major in agriculture would be a blunder. (Carleton doesn't have an agriculture major.)

An upside to this type of question is that, while working on the essay, the student might realize that she is not a match for the college—and it's better to know that sooner than later.

The "creative" question

The goals of the "creative" question are

to evaluate a candidate's **ability to think and write creatively** and to assess the breadth of her knowledge and education.

Example: "Sharing intellectual interests is an important aspect of university life. Describe an experience or idea that you find intellectually exciting, and explain why." (Stanford University, 2007)

What is a completed College Application?

A completed College Application Packet consists of the following:

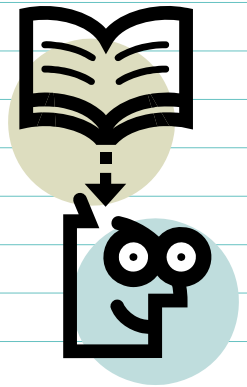
- The college application completed in ink (neat handwriting)
- Application fee (Fee waivers are available for applications in the Guidance office)
- SAT/ACT Scores
- Letters of Recommendation (You should include at least two letters with your application)
- Essay (This should express your personality and help you stand out among others)
- Your entire application should create a consistent portrait of who you are and what you'll bring to the college. The more the pieces of the puzzle support one impression, the more confident the admission committee will be in admitting you. If the essay or interview contradicts information you gave on other forms, you may cause them to have doubts about accepting you.
- If all the parts of your application are filled out honestly and carefully, with attention to your conviction that each school is a good match for you, you will come across in the best light possible.

How to Reduce Test Taking Anxiety

Do you worry about your scores? When you study do you feel that your brain is creeping along in slow motion? Do you cram for hours, yet still find it hard to remember the material?

Use these strategies to help with your next test:

- **Study less but more frequently**– study for 30 minutes at a time with breaks in between each day
- **Add in time for an occasional review**– Pick a day for review of all new information once a week to help with exam review
- **Rephrase their worries**– Think positive about tests
- **Picture the test setting**– Picture yourself passing the test and imagine good feelings when you turn in the test



Howard P. Rawlings Educational Assistance Grant

Attention High School Students: Any high school senior interested in attending a 2 year or 4year college in Maryland is available to receive an educational assistance Grant (**FREE MONEY**) by completing and filling out the **FAFSA NO LATER THAN March 1, 2009. You cannot apply before January 1, 2009**





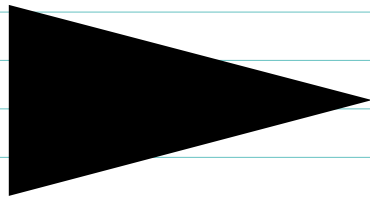
Guidance

Job Board

Part Time Vet. Receptionist at Greenbrier Hospital in Fairfax, VA . Hours are Monday– Friday 3-7pm and one Saturday a month 8am-2pm. Starting salary of \$10-12 an hour. Please fax resume and cover letter to (703) 378-1620

Youth Poll workers for Election Day. Please contact Dr. Asterilla if you interested.

Student Temporary Employment Program is looking for high school seniors to work in government positions. Please see Ms. Langston for more information.



Scholarships

- DC CAP Scholarship “Why I want to go to College” Scholarship is due Monday, November 24th. Please see Ms. Johnson for more details.
- Edward Davis Education Foundation Scholarship is accepting applications for students interested in auto mechanics. Applications due by November 15th. Please see Ms. Langston for more details.
- Freedom in America essay writing contest is accepting applications. Deadline for submitting applications is November 20th. Please see Ms. Langston for an application
- DC Costco Scholarship application deadline is due December 1st. Please see Ms. Johnson for more details.
- Voice of Democracy Scholarship is accepting applications for students interested in presenting a 3-5minute speech for a local competition for a \$25, 000 scholarship. Application deadline is November 15th.
- SAMMY Award is to open high school senior athletes that demonstrate excellence in academics, athletic performance, leadership and community service. Please see Ms. Langston for more information.



Children are the only future of any people.