



COLLEGE PLANNING

The CCS Way

Keri Shields

Director of College and Academic Counseling

5th Edition

The mission of Crossings Christian School (CCS) is to partner with parents and church to develop students into Christ-centered servant leaders who are academically and spiritually prepared for college and life.

Dear CCS Family,

To fulfill Crossings Christian School's mission of "preparing students for college and life," I have made it my mission to know everything I can about the college admissions process. Compiling and organizing a book like this one for CCS students and parents has been a goal of mine for several years. Now, after more than ten years as the academic counselor at Crossings Christian School, it has *finally* happened. With the experience and wisdom of my peers, colleagues, past and present students, and parents, I have included the information I believe is most important for you to know about preparing for college.

Please don't be like me as a high school student; take advantage of the resources available to you.
Start by reading this book!

Also, know that I am praying for you and believing in your success as a scholar and as a bright light for Christ!

Supporting Your Success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keri Shields". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Keri Shields, M.S."

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THE COLLEGE FRENZY

Especially in a competitive college-going culture, we can lose sight of what's truly important. While this book contains what you need to know to get ready for college, don't get sucked into a vacuum of stress, crisis, and doubt. If you've learned anything from being a Crossings Christian School student, remember who is in control. Do your part and allow God to do His.

A student in a course titled *Life Worth Living* at Yale University taught by Miroslav Volf, asked this essential question: *What do you want in life, and is that worth wanting?*"

When thinking about your future, this is THE question you need to ask yourself and pray about.

What do you want in life? Is that worth wanting?

Here are some thoughts from CCS alumni:

Don't worry about small things as much. It will all work out in the end. If you get involved from the beginning, no matter where you go or how exactly you get involved, I believe you'll find your place and love college!

Natalie Ramer, CCS, Class of 2017; University of Oklahoma, Class of 2021

Your college decision can be a really nerve-racking experience, but something that gave me peace was putting my decision in the hands of the Lord. I prayed over every single school that I researched, every school that emailed me, every school that sent me a flyer in the mail. I prayed that God would give me an open heart and an open mind to consider things outside what I wanted for myself and to let God guide my decisions. God was gracious enough to give me all those things in Pace University. Work hard in high school, pray over your college process from beginning to end, and trust in the Lord with the outcome. You will undoubtedly end up exactly where you need to be.

Camryn Conroy, CCS, Class of 2017; Pace University, Class of 2021

What I would say to those who are choosing a college, make sure it's what you want to do, not others, since you will be spending the next 4+ years of your life here. Also, if it takes you less or more than 4 years, don't compare to others. God has the perfect timeline for you.

Wittney Turner, CCS, Class of 2017; University of Arkansas, Class of 2021

Don't worry about the name, size, or popularity of the university. Don't choose a school based only on the football team or the number of people you know going. The thing that truly matters is how you feel when you step on campus. Do you feel at home? Is it comfortable? Is it relaxing? Exciting? If all of those answers are yes, then the transition will be so much easier and you will find more things to get involved in.

Bradley Weast, CCS, Class of 2014; Abilene Christian University, Class of 2019

I love University of Mary Hardin Baylor because it was a customized experience to help me succeed. I am a professional wedding photographer and created my business my junior year in college and am now booked through 2022. If I had gone to another college where the professors were teaching 1,000 plus kids, I don't think I would have been pushed by my professors to pursue my dream job.

Cameron Shivers O'Neill, CCS, Class of 2014; Mary Hardin Baylor, Class of 2019

When you find your college, don't be afraid to branch out and try new things, even if you think you may not like it. Get plugged in to some sort of organization and try to talk to students about classes, dorms, and fun events.

Katie Johnson, CCS, Class of 2016; University of Denver, Class of 2020

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AT CCS

The primary mission of the academic counselor at CCS is to prepare students for college. To fulfill this mission, I need to understand your biggest college goal from the start. Do you dream of going to an Ivy League college? Do you want to follow a long-held family tradition of going to OU? Do you want to go to college in California? Have you always dreamed of going to West Point? Are you an Oklahoma's Promise candidate? Knowing your college goal will help me know how to help you. And it's okay if you don't know. You'll get there.

*As a freshman in high school, ask yourself – What is my college goal?
Remember, your goal can be adjusted throughout high school.*

THE KEY TERMS

THE CCS WAY: Simply put, it is a higher standard. THE CCS WAY means to be a Christ-seeker, a dedicated scholar, a person concerned about serving others more than one's self, a person with high integrity, and someone willing to go the extra mile.

THE KEY PLAYERS

YOU, THE STUDENT, THE APPLICANT: High school is an exciting time! Your college choice is one of the first major decisions of your young adult life. Take advantage of the people around you to help you, but make sure that **YOU**, the student, the applicant, take ownership of the process. An important mentor to me, former college counselor Dr. Jan Miranda, coined this phrase -- ***Applicant is singular not plural!*** You are the one applying to college; so, you need to take charge of the process.

PARENTS: The college process requires teamwork; parents are the head coaches of the team. As the head coaches, the job of the parents is to guide and support but not play. Parents sometimes think they are helping the process or “opening doors” for the student. When parents take over the process, they are making **you**, the applicant, seem incapable.

ACADEMIC COUNSELOR: I am your advocate in the college process. My role is to provide the best resources and information you need to find your best college fit. If you have questions, send me an email or drop by my office. I want to help you! Instead of having your mom or dad call to ask a question, I'd prefer for you to do it. Getting to know you during high school through these small interactions allows me to develop a relationship with you. It isn't easy to write a letter of recommendation for you when I've mainly talked to your mom or dad.

COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES: You are encouraged to become well acquainted with the college representative (sometimes called Admissions Counselors or Recruitment Specialists). This person works for the college admissions office and is assigned to represent the college to you. This person will most likely be the first reader of all applications from a particular high school, city, or area of the country. You can find the CCS representative by searching the Admissions section of a college's website.

TEACHERS: Many colleges want letters of recommendation from teachers. Our teachers are more than willing to write letters of recommendation, but it is not part of their job description.

Teachers do not get paid extra for taking the time to do this task. It would be in your best interest to demonstrate a work ethic and attitude worthy of a great letter of recommendation.

UPPER SCHOOL REGISTRAR: Official paperwork such as your transcript must be sent from institution to institution. The school registrar will prepare and mail your transcript and other official paperwork. Be mindful of the process for requesting a transcript. As our school grows, the registrar will need more time to get this done for students. ***When applying to college, transcripts will be requested through SCOIR, our online college planning system.***

WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR COLLEGE PREPARATION

Your high school GPA, your standardized test scores (ACT or SAT), and your involvement and success in your extra-curricular activities are the main components of your college application.

Know that 80% of colleges accept more than half of its applicants. Getting into college is not a problem; going to the *best* college for you is the goal.

You will often hear a college say they have a holistic application review process. This means the admissions committee is looking at the whole person when making a decision. Colleges typically prefer applicants who have most or all of the following characteristics:

- Good grades and a challenging course load;
- Strong test scores;
- Honest, specific, and well-written essays;
- A spike (specialization is something that will set you apart from other applicants in an authentic way) in extracurricular activities;
- Compelling letters of recommendation;
- Volunteer experience with clear impact on the groups or places you've helped;
- Any relevant or impactful work experience.

Your GPA, your standardized test scores, and your involvement and success in extra-curricular activities are the main components of your college application.

YOUR GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

Your grade point average (GPA) is an essential and unavoidable part of the college application process. When you apply to college in the fall of your senior year, your GPA is based on six semesters of high school. Colleges use your grade point average (GPA) as a measure of your engagement in learning and willingness to work hard to meet CCS's academic standards. Your GPA provides colleges a comprehensive look at your academic strengths and weaknesses and your desire to challenge yourself.

In the U.S., the average unweighted high school GPA is 3.0.

In the U.S., the average unweighted GPA for admission to top colleges is 3.5 – 4.0.

UNWEIGHTED GPA


Unweighted GPA is the most common way to measure academic performance in high school. Unweighted GPAs are measured on a scale of 0 to 4.0 and do not take the difficulty of your courses into account.

WEIGHTED GPA

Weighted GPA is often used by high schools to better represent students' academic accomplishments. Weighted GPA takes into account course difficulty rather than providing the same letter grade to GPA conversion for every student. Usually, weighted GPA is measured on a scale of 0 to 5.0.

CCS includes both your unweighted and weighted GPA on your transcript.

CCS TRANSCRIPT EXAMPLE



Crossings Christian School
 The mission of Crossings Christian School is to partner with parents and church to develop students into Christ-centered servant leaders who are academically and spiritually prepared for college and life. Accredited by Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

14400 N. Portland Avenue
 Oklahoma City, OK 73134
 www.crossingsschool.org
 Phone: 405-842-8495
 FAX: 405-767-1520
 CEEB Code: 372717

Student Name [REDACTED]
Address/City/State/Zip: [REDACTED]

Gender: Male
Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
Enrolled Since: [REDACTED]
Graduation Date: [REDACTED]

GPA: 3.75
UGPA: 3.47

9th Grade - 2015-2016

Course Title	Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2	Points
Algebra I	1.00	86	81	3.00
Biology I (PreAP)	1.00	90	90	4.50
Cultural Geography	0.50	92	4.00	
English I Lit. & Comp. (PreAP)	1.00	84	86	3.50
Hermeneutics	1.00	92	87	3.50
Oklahoma History	0.50	93	4.00	
Spanish I	1.00	90	90	4.00
Theatre Arts	1.00	91	100	4.00
Year Credits / GPA	7.00			3.79
Servant Leadership Hours	81.5			

10th Grade - 2016-2017

Course Title	Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2	Points
Chemistry	1.00	83	80	3.00
English II World Lit. (PreAP)	1.00	90	80	4.00
Financial Literacy	0.50		P	0.00
Geometry	1.00	81	81	3.00
Show Choir	1.00	P	P	0.00
Spanish II	1.00	90	82	3.50
Theology	1.00	92	90	4.00
Vocal Music	1.00	100	100	4.00
Web Design (Summer) - SS	0.50	99	4.00	
World History (AP)	1.00	83	83	4.00
Year Credits / GPA	9.00			3.67
Servant Leadership Hours	109			

11th Grade - 2017-2018

Course Title	Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2	Points
Algebra II	1.00	76	72	2.00
English III Lang. & Comp (AP)	1.00	87	77	3.50
Human Anatomy/Physiology	1.00	92	82	3.50
Old Testament Survey (Dual Credit)	1.00	85	76	3.50
Show Choir	0.50	P		0.00
Theatre Production	1.00	100	100	4.00
United States History (AP)	1.00	74	86	3.50
Vocal Music	1.00	100	100	4.00
Year Credits / GPA	7.50			3.43
Servant Leadership Hours	36			

12th Grade - 2018-2019

Course Title	Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2	Points
Digital Media Production	1.00	99	100	4.00
English IV Lit. & Comp.	1.00	82	87	3.00
Intermediate Algebra (Summer) - SS	1.00	95	4.00	
New Testament Survey (DC)	1.00	87	88	4.00
Psychology (AP)	0.50	95	5.00	
Public Speaking (DC)	1.00	97	94	5.00
U.S. Government	0.50	94	4.00	
Vocal Music	1.00	100	100	4.00
Zoology	1.00	92	94	4.00
Year Credits / GPA	8.00			4.06
Servant Leadership Hours	34			



This transcript is unofficial until signed and sealed by a school administrator.

Signature / Title / Date

<p>Credits for Graduation</p> <p>Bible: 4 English: 4 Math 3 (4*) Science 3 (4*) Social Studies 4 Foreign Language 2 Speech .5 Technology .5 Electives 3 (4*) Servant Leadership 25 hours per year</p> <p>Total Credits = 24</p> <p>Total Credits (Distinguished Achievement*) = 27</p> <p>Distinguished Achievement Diploma</p> <p>1) Must have completed junior and senior year at CCS; 2) Must take at least 27 credits, including four credits of core classes: Bible, English, Math, Science, and Social Studies; in addition, .5 Technology and .5 Public Speaking credit requirement. 3) In addition, at least three years of the same foreign language or three years in an elective specialty or four (4) credits of AP and/or Dual Credit courses or approved Capstone Project</p>	<p>Grading Scale</p> <p>90 - 100 = A 80 - 89 = B 70 - 79 = C 60 - 69 = D 59 and Below = F Regular classes (4.0 scale) Pre-AP/Honors (4.5 scale) AP / Dual (5.0 Scale) NC = No Credit</p>
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HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES & COURSE OF STUDY

Use the **CCS Academic Course Catalog** published each **January** as your **best resource and partner to this book**. The Academic Course Catalog will list the classes being offered for the upcoming school year. Graduation requirements are listed and academic policies will be detailed.

Course selection meetings are held in January with course selections for the following year due the first Monday in March.

Colleges want to know how you academically performed at our school. By using our school profile (updated in August of each year), colleges will look at the courses we offer and compare it with

the classes you opted to take. Colleges will use our school profile to understand how we determine grades and calculate GPA. The CCS School Profile is available in the main office at the upper school and also published on our school website.

The best strategy for selecting classes sounds simple but is the best one – take the classes best for you.

When selecting your classes, your high school mind is going to say, “Okay, I’m going to take the Honors English class instead of the core English class because I heard the teacher is easier.” Or, “I’m going to do yearbook because it will be an easy A.” Or possibly, “I’m going to take AP Chemistry because my best friend is going to take AP Chemistry.”

If you take the classes *best* for you, you won’t have to worry when the “easier” teacher does not return. If you take the courses best for you, you will apply for yearbook because you enjoy working in a fast-paced, highly-collaborative, and deadline-oriented environment. You will only take AP Chemistry if you are ready for a tough academic challenge.

Being true to yourself and knowing your strengths and weaknesses is essential in selecting your high school classes and being successful in those classes.

As a freshman, start with your biggest college goal in mind. If your goal is to attend a highly selective school (colleges that accept 10% or less of applicants) like Harvard, Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, and Vanderbilt, know that you need to take the hardest classes CCS offers and also do well in them. If you know that you want to be an engineer, you need to select the toughest math classes available and have taken *at least* Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus and *preferably* Calculus by the time you graduate. If you are looking at a state university, know that you can take a more balanced approach to your class selection.

Over my ten years as your academic counselor, I have heard this question many times: ***Is it better to make a higher grade in an easier class than making a lower grade in a harder class?***

The simple answer is no.

There are a few things to consider when making the decision.

HARDER CLASSES V. EASIER CLASSES

PROS OF TAKING THE HARDER CLASS	PROS OF TAKING THE EASIER CLASS
If you plan on applying to a selective school, it's a must.	You have a better shot of making a better grade.
Honors, AP, & Dual Credit classes are weighted, boosting your GPA.	Usually, the easier class has less homework.
If college-prep is the goal, then a rigorous class will best prepare you for college.	You will have more time to devote to other activities important to you.
If it's an AP or Dual Credit class, then you can earn college credit while in high school.	Taking a less difficult class will most likely decrease your stress level.
You will most likely cover more material than the less challenging class and leave the class knowing more about the subject than otherwise.	You may have more fun learning the material without the pressure of a faster-paced, more rigorous class.

Don't be afraid to take challenging courses in high school! Get used to challenging yourself while you're in a smaller environment and can have more individualized help from your teachers.

Camryn Conroy, CCS, Class of 2017; Pace University, Class of 2021

YOUNG WOMEN INTERESTED IN GREEK LIFE

If being in a sorority during college is important to you, know the facts about GPA requirements for recruitment. **You do not need to take easier classes because you want to be in a sorority.** Most chapter houses have a minimum GPA requirement of 3.2. The highest GPA requirement I could find was 3.25 unweighted GPA. Some colleges re-calculate GPA based on four core classes (English, Math, Science, Social Studies); some use your overall GPA

The rule-of-thumb is to stay at or above a 3.5 unweighted GPA if sorority recruitment is something you'll want to do.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) EXAMS

The purpose of taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes is to earn college credit by passing the AP exam. Every college determines what score will earn credit at each college. This database allows you to search a college and the scores they require for an AP exam to earn credit in college. For example, scoring a 3 (5 is the highest score) on the AP Spanish Language exam will give you credit for 13 hours at OU. Scoring a 3 on the AP Chemistry exam will earn four (4) credits at OSU and a score of 4 will earn nine (9) credits.

If you are applying to highly selective colleges, having high AP scores on several AP exams will certainly look good on your application. But having lower scores on your AP exams could be looked upon negatively. If you are going to take AP exams, take them seriously and do the best you can on them.

Take more AP classes!

Maddy Mazerole, CCS, Class of 2015; OSU, Class of 2019

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) AWARDS

- AP Scholar – granted to students who receive 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams
- AP Scholar with Honor – granted to students who receive an average of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.
- AP Scholar with Distinction – granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

DUAL CREDIT CLASSES

Dual Credit classes give you the opportunity to take college classes while in high school. Much of the time, these credits will transfer to the college you attend. Unlike the AP exam, you don't have to make a certain score on the AP exam at the end of the school year in order to earn credit. As long as you make a 70% or above in the dual credit class, you will receive credit. Please note that your GPA on your dual credit college transcript will transfer as well. Take advantage of the dual credit opportunities available to you. CCS partners with Colorado Christian University (CCU) and at \$200 per class (subject to change), getting college credit while in high school is a bargain.

If an AP class is also a dual credit class, take it! Don't be afraid of the harder class. You can save a lot of money in college by taking dual credit classes.

Cole McMurphy, CCS, Class of 2019; OU, Class of 2024

You are probably asking, "Mrs. Shields, how do I know if the dual credit class will transfer to the college I want to attend?" That's a great question!

In your internet browser, search "college credit transfer" + the name of university.

Most colleges have a database where you can enter the college, in our case, Colorado Christian University (CCU), select the class you took through CCU and see how it transfers at the new college.

SAMPLE OF CCS/CCU DUAL CREDIT CLASS OFFERINGS & TRANSFER CREDITS

*Note: This is NOT a complete list of CCS's dual credit offerings.
Dual Credit offerings are subject to change from year to year.*

CCS Class	CCU	UCO	OK STATE	OU	U OF ARKANSAS
AP Biology	BIO 101 Biological Life (4 credits)	BIO 10AA Biological Life & BIO18TT Lab (4 credits)	BIOL 1114 Intro to Bio (N); BIOL 1-BIOL Elective; (4 credits)	BIOL 1005 Concepts in Biology w/lab (4 credits)	BIOL 1543 Prin. Biology & BIOL 1541L Lab (4 credits)
AP English Lang. & Comp.	ENG 102 English Comp. (3 credits)	ENG 1113 English Comp (3 credits)	ENGL 1113 Composition 1 (H) (3 credits)	ENGL 1113 Principles Engl Comp. (3 credits)	ENGL 1013 Comp 1 (3 credits)
AP Psychology	PSY 101 General Psychology (3 credits)	PSY 1103 General Psychology (3 credits)	PSYC_1113_ Intro. Psychology (S) (3 credits)	PSY 1113 Elements of Psychology (3 credits)	PSYC 2003 General Psych. (3 credits)
AP World History	HIS 185 Western Civ (3 credits)	HIS 188T Elective (3 credits)	HIST_1613_ Western Civ to 1500 (HS) (3 credits)	HIST 1613 Western Civ. I 3 credits)	HIST 1113 World Civ 1 (3 credits)
College Algebra	MAT 111 College Algebra (3 credits)	MAT 188T College Algebra (3 credits)	MATH 1513 College Algebra (A) (3 credits)	MATH 1503 College Algebra (3 credits)	MATH 1203 College Algebra (3 credits)
New Testament Survey	BIB 197 ST-NT Gospels (3 credits)	No transfer equivalent	REL 2023 New Test Scrip (H) (3 credits)	RELS 1999* Lower Division Transfer Credit (3 credits)	No transfer equivalent
Old Testament Survey	BIB 111 Hist. & Lit. of Ancient Israel (3 credits)	ELT 10AA Elective (3 credits)	REL 213 Hebrew Scriptures (H) (3 credits)	RELS 1999* Lower Division Transfer Credit (3 credits)	HIST 199T Hist & Lit. Ancient Israel (3 credits)
\$200 per class (8) \$1800	\$200 per 8 classes; \$1600 while in high school at CCS	Approx. \$310 per credit hour (19 credits) \$5,890	Approx. \$400 per credit hour (22 credits) \$8,800	Approx. \$400 per credit hour (22 credits) \$8,800	Resident: Approx. \$325 per credit hour (19 credits) \$6,175 Non-Resident: \$875 per credit hour (19 credits) \$16,625

*Note: At OU, Old Testament & New Testament transfer to OU as the same class, RELS 1999

STANDARDIZED TESTING

2020 brought about massive change in college admissions; the pandemic may have forever changed the way college admissions works, possibly for the better. Most colleges have decided to be test optional, meaning applicants are not required to submit standardized test scores. Colleges treat standardized test scores as additive to the student's application. More consideration is given to other components. Will this continue? No one really knows yet. The majority of college admission experts I follow contend that having a high ACT or SAT score is still an important piece in college admissions.

The two most common standardized tests are the ACT and SAT. However, other standardized tests are being developed. For example, the Classic Learning Test (CLT) is being accepted by Christian colleges. In Oklahoma, Oklahoma Baptist University, Oklahoma Christian University, and Oklahoma Wesleyan University are accepting CLT scores.

Because colleges get thousands of applications each year, scores on the ACT or SAT help them quickly narrow the playing field. Some of you will find that scoring well on the ACT and/or SAT is a piece of cake and others will find it more difficult. At the end of your freshman year or beginning of your sophomore year, take the ACT or SAT without prepping for it. This will give you a baseline score, and you'll know which areas are your strengths and which are your weaknesses. The best time to take a prep course is typically after your sophomore year or first semester of your junior year. Research shows that after you've taken a prep course, scores tend to plateau after three attempts. Remember, all you can do is your best. If you know you've done your best, be okay with your score.

The best time to take an ACT or SAT prep course is after your sophomore year or first semester of junior year.

PSAT & NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

While the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) is not required for college admission, it is the only test to qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Beginning with your freshman year in high school, CCS will register and pay for you to take the PSAT on a designated national test date in October. You will be registered to take the PSAT your sophomore and junior year as well. **Only the PSAT taken the junior year can be used to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship competition.**

Approximately 1.6 million juniors take the PSAT each year and only the top 1% are identified as Semifinalists. Qualifying scores vary from state to state, but all Semifinalists scores are extremely high. In Oklahoma, the Semifinalist cut-off score in 2019 was 215; in 2018, 216; in 2017, 213.

PSAT NATIONAL AWARDS

- National Hispanic Scholar
- National Merit Commended Student
- National Merit Finalist
- National Merit Scholar
- National Merit Semifinalist

SHOULD I TAKE THE ACT OR SAT?

When it comes to standardized testing, I hear this question the most: *Which college admission test should I take?*

Colleges will take either and do not prefer one over the other. Approximately two million students take the ACT and two million take the SAT each year.

Colleges will take either the ACT or SAT and do not prefer one over the other. You need to determine which test is best for you.

COMPARISON CHART: ACT V. SAT

	ACT	SAT
TOTAL TIME	2 hrs 55 mins without Writing 3 hrs 35 mins with Writing	3 hrs without Essay 3 hrs 50 mins with Essay
ORDER OF SECTIONS	English Math (May use calculator) Reading Science Writing (optional)	Reading/Writing & Language Math No Calculator; Math with Calculator Essay (optional)
TIME PER SECTION	English: 45 mins Math: 60 mins Reading: 35 mins Science: 35 mins Writing (optional): 40 mins	Reading: 65 mins Writing and Language: 35 mins Math No Calculator: 25 mins Math Calculator: 55 mins Essay (optional): 50 mins
# OF QUESTIONS	English: 75 questions Math: 60 questions Reading: 40 questions Science: 40 questions Writing (optional): 1 essay	Reading: 52 questions Writing and Language: 44 questions Math No Calculator: 20 questions Math Calculator: 38 questions Essay (optional): 1 essay
SCORING	Total score range: 1-36 Each section uses a scale of 1-36 . Your total score is the average of your four section scores. The optional Writing section uses a scale of 2-12 and does not count toward your final score.	Total score range: 400-1600 The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and Math sections each use a scale of 200-800 and are combined for a total score. The optional Essay uses three separate scales of 1-8 and does not count toward your final score.
COSTS	As of January 2021: \$55 (no writing) \$70 (with writing)	As of January 2021, \$52 \$68 with essay
REGISTRATION	<u>Register for the ACT</u>	<u>Register for the SAT</u>

SHOULD I TAKE THE SAT OR ACT?

Agree or disagree with the following statements:

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE
I am better at algebra than geometry.		
I am good at solving math problems without a calculator.		
Science is not my favorite.		
It's easier for me to analyze a text than to explain my opinion.		
I normally do well on math tests.		
I can't recall math formulas easily.		
I like coming up with my own answers for math questions.		
Tight time constraints stress me out.		
I can easily find evidence to back up my answers.		
Chronologically arranged questions are easier to follow.		

SCORING KEY:

Mostly Agrees: The SAT is your best bet. If you agreed with most of all of the above statements, the SAT is what you've been looking for in a college admissions test. With the SAT, you'll have more time for each question and won't need to worry about a science section or a ton of geometry questions.

Mostly Disagrees: The ACT's the one for you! If you disagreed with more or all of the statements, you'll likely prefer the ACT over the SAT. On the ACT, you'll never have to come up with your own answers to math problems, and you get to let your opinion shine in your writing.

Equal Agrees and Disagrees: Either test will work! If you checked "agreed" and "disagreed" equally, either the ACT or SAT will suit you. I would pick one and stick with it.

SHOULD I TAKE THE WRITING/ESSAY PORTION OF THE ACT OR SAT?

Fewer colleges are requiring the writing portion, but here's an [up-to-date-list](#) of those colleges that require or recommend it.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

The [SAT Subject Tests](#) used to be an important requirement for admission to highly selective colleges. It is still required by some, but the list of colleges requiring them is declining rapidly. As with the writing portions of the ACT and SAT, fewer colleges are requiring SAT Subject Tests. There are some selective colleges that still *require* or *strongly recommend* or *recommend* them. If a college does strongly recommend or recommend, I'd take the minimum number recommended. Here is an [updated list](#) of those colleges.

TEST OPTIONAL COLLEGES

As mentioned previously, the pandemic prompted most colleges to change their admission criteria to be test optional. Before 2020, there were many colleges that didn't require ACT or SAT scores. A growing number of colleges are becoming test flexible or test optional schools. Specific policies differ from school to school, but "test-optional" typically means that a university will treat standardized test scores as additive to the student's profile rather than required. More consideration is given to the other components – transcript, letters of recommendation and extracurricular involvement. And many admissions counselors look more closely for demonstrated growth over the four years of high school. You do need to be aware of the additional requirements they do require. [FairTest](#), the national center for fair and open testing, began the movement twenty years ago with the mission of understanding standardized testing. There are over [200 top-tier universities who are test-optional](#).

If you are a student who has a high GPA but low standardized test scores, test optional colleges may be the perfect choice for you.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

High school isn't only about the classes you take during the school day. The extra things you do outside of school make you authentically you. When you have a choice to make about how you spend your time – the next hour, the weekend, your spring break, or your summer, what do you choose to do?

Understanding how you choose to spend your time when you have free time is the best way to understand who you are, what you value, and what is important to you.

When you are completing college applications, you are essentially telling them who you are in many ways. Your GPA tells the college what kind of student you are. Your ACT or SAT score indicates how well you perform on standardized exams. Your essays reveal to admissions about your character, personality, and worldview. Your letters of recommendation tell a college what other people think of you. And your extracurricular activities show what you enjoy doing and how you will contribute to their campus.

Admission committees want to see what makes you authentically you. My counsel is to be involved and stay involved in activities you enjoy doing.

It is not the number of activities you have that is impressive to colleges; it is the level of involvement, leadership, and success you have in the extracurricular activities that impresses them.

WHAT'S YOUR SPIKE?

Selective colleges are not looking for a well-rounded applicant. **Selective colleges are looking for specific applicants to form a well-rounded class.** The latest college admissions buzzword is *spike* – a specialization that will set you apart from other applicants in an authentic way.

So, what's your spike?

You have to focus on what you love to do. You know you love something when you lose track of time while doing it. You can't worry about what you think a college admissions committee wants your spike to be. Your spike is authentic to you.

The MIT dean of admissions, Stu Schmill, tells students, “If you couldn’t write about this on your college application, would you still do it? If the answer is no, then you shouldn’t be doing it.”

ACADEMIC SPIKE

Let’s say you love science. Don’t just limit yourself to good grades in your science classes. You need to find avenues to go deeper into science. Take additional science courses not offered at CCS. [EdX](#) and [Coursera](#) are sites where free courses are offered by top universities. Do you want to learn the basics of Biochemistry, take [this introductory course](#) taught by professors at Harvard University. Do you love computers? Take a free course in [writing creative code](#) through New York University. Is architecture your passion? Take the [Roman Architecture](#) course through Yale University. If you are truly passionate about a subject, you can specialize by learning all you can about it. Perhaps you can reach out to a professor or professional in a specific field to mentor you. You can also compete in selective competitions that are recognized within that field. Take a look at the section devoted to state and national competitions for direction.

SPORTS SPIKE

If God blessed you with an incredible athletic talent, then you have your sports spike. But what if you really love a sport but won’t necessarily get a sports scholarship from it? In addition to being committed to your sport and your team, find ways to make a deeper impact through your involvement. Find ways to promote your sport through leadership. For example, you could organize a charity sports event to raise awareness or donations for a cause you believe in. You could create a mentorship program encouraging younger kids to participate in your sport. If you work at a summer camp, request to be involved in leading the sport you love to the campers.

LEADERSHIP SPIKE

If you are a natural born leader, don’t stop with being a Student Council representative at CCS. Be willing to put yourself out there and attend leadership camps available to you. Never say no to a leadership opportunity. How can you use your leadership skills to make a positive impact on your school, your community, your neighborhood? Are you passionate about a specific population? I’ll bet there is a teen board you can apply to that would be an enriching leadership experience for you. The possibilities are really endless.

NON-TRADITIONAL SPIKE

I know a family that loves fishing. This family hobby has turned into a passion for the two middle school boys in the family. Their goal is to fish in all fifty states, and they are well on their way to this goal.

While this is not a traditional kind of spike, it is unique. Being able to articulate how fishing in Oklahoma is different from fishing in California or Wyoming or Colorado or Rhode Island is a way of becoming a specialist in fishing. Do you see where I am going?

Whatever you love to do has the potential to be your spike.

CREATING A RESUMÉ

A resum  is not just for old people like me searching for a job. You will find that having a current resum  on hand will be beneficial for college and scholarship applications as well as looking for part-time employment. A resum 's job is to provide a snapshot of your education, extracurriculars, accomplishments, and skills. **If you keep track of these things after each semester (beginning with your freshman year in high school), your life will be so much better. Trying to remember everything you did in high school as a senior is much harder than you think!**

Ask your mom and/or dad to help you with your resum ! Start your resum  after the first semester of your freshman year in high school!

There are many templates available online to use, making formatting easy. Start with Google Docs and search for student resum  templates. The important part is to have a template to use when you begin creating it.

ACADEMIC HONORS

When completing college applications, seniors often ask me, "What exactly is an honor?" An academic honor or award is any academic or leadership achievement you've made and been recognized for in some way. The form of recognition can range from an actual object, such as a trophy or plaque or certificate, to prize money, a title, or verbal recognition.

WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC HONOR?

An academic honor will fall into the following categories:

- Distinction, honor, or honorable mention for which you won't usually receive a physical object award—just the title
- A diploma or certificate indicating the completion of a program or recognizing an accomplishment in a program or other activity
- Prize or award won from a contest, competition, or tournament
- Scholarship given in recognition of an outstanding (academic) accomplishment
- Membership in a highly selective and competitive group or society (leadership program, teen boards)

I want you to know what's potentially available to achieve, so I've compiled a list of academic and leadership honors you should know is available.

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC & LEADERSHIP HONORS AVAILABLE

This is NOT *an exhaustive list. There may be others I am unaware of.*

CROSSINGS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ACADEMIC AWARDS & HONORS

- Distinguished Achievement Diploma – see Student Handbook for specific details
- Head of School's Honor Roll – 4.0 weighted GPA & above
- Principal's Honor Roll – 3.50 weighted GPA & above
- National Honor Society Membership (11th & 12th) – 3.75 weighted GPA & above
- National Junior Honor Society Membership (9th & 10th) – 3.75 weighted GPA & above
- Distinguished High School Student Awards (ACSI)(10th, 11th, 12th)
- Knights of the Roundtable (CCS award)
- Fruit of the Spirit Award (CCS character award)
- Subject/Class Specific Awards
- Publication in CCS Literary Magazine

OKLAHOMA-SPECIFIC ACADEMIC AWARDS

- Fleming Scholar Program
- Oklahoma Academic All-State
- Oklahoma Academic Scholar
- Oklahoma Arts Institute Quartz Mountain Participant
- Optimist Oratorical Competition Winner

OKLAHOMA-SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP AWARDS & HONORS

- Arts Council OKC Teen Arts Council
- Children's Hospital Foundation Teen Board
- Cleats for Kids Varsity Teen Board
- Expeditions in Etiquette Student Ambassador Program
- Federal Reserve Bank Student Board of OKC
- Four Star Leadership with General Tommy Franks
- Focus on the Home Teen Board
- Infant Crisis Services Summer Program & Teen Board
- Oklahoma City Citizens Caring for Children Teen Board
- OKC Beautiful Teen Board
- Oklahoma Boys State
- Oklahoma Girls State
- Oklahoma Eating Disorders Association Junior Board
- Oklahoma Hall of Fame Teen Board
- Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation Teen Leaders
- OKC Zoo Junior Curator Program
- Payne Education Teen Board
- Pivot: Teen Service Board
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) Summer Program
- Science Museum of Oklahoma Teen Apprentice Program

- Special Care Teen Board
- Volume: Children's Center Rehabilitation Center Summer Program & Teen Leadership Board
- Youth Leadership Edmond
- Youth Leadership Exchange (Y LX), Youth In Action, & Youth Council of OKC

NATIONAL AWARDS & LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- US Presidential Scholar
- American Red Cross National Youth Council
- Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout Ranking
- Camp Fire USA Teens In Action
Camp Fire USA National Youth Advisory Cabinet (YAC)
- Camp Fire USA Counselor-In-Training (CIT) Program
- Camp Fire USA Wohelo Awards (highest achievement for youth in Camp Fire)
- The Coolidge Scholarship For America (only juniors can apply; Full-Ride Merit Scholarship for any accredited American university)
- FEMA Youth Preparedness Council
- Four Star Leadership with General Tommy Franks (This is held in Oklahoma City.)
- Girl Scouts Gold Award Winner
- Rotary Youth Programs (Rotaract Clubs, Interact Clubs, Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards)

NATIONAL COMPETITION & CONTESTS

Award for high placement (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th) or participation in any major (academic) contest, such as (but not limited to) the following:

- AAN Neuroscience Research Prize
- Academic Decathlon
- Academic Triathlon
- American Regions Mathematical League (ARML)
- Conrad Spirit of Innovation Challenge

- [Davidson Fellows Scholarship](#)
- [Doodle 4 Google](#)
- [Google Science Fair](#)
- [Intel International Science and Engineering Fair \(ISEF\)](#)
- [International BioGENEius Challenge](#)
- [International Chemistry Olympiad](#)
- [International Mathematical Olympiad](#)
- [International Photography Awards \(IPA\)](#)
- [Kids Philosophy Slam](#)
- [Lifesmarts](#)
- [Microsoft Imagine Cup](#)
- [MIT THINK Scholars Program](#)
- [Model UN](#)
- [National Academic League](#)
- [National Academic Quiz Tournament](#)
- [National Economics Challenge by CEE](#)
- [National Geographic Bee](#)
- [National Geographic Student Photo Contest](#)
- [National High School Mock Trial Championship](#)
- [National Science Bowl](#)
- [National Science Olympiad](#)
- [Physics Bowl](#)
- [Quiz Bowl](#)
- [Regional/National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium](#)
- [Scholastic Art & Writing Awards](#)
- [Scripps Spelling Bee](#)
- [Toshiba/NSTA Explora Vision Awards](#)
- [YoungArts' National Arts Competition](#)

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) AWARDS

- AP Scholar – granted to students who receive 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams
- AP Scholar with Honor – granted to students who receive an average of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.
- AP Scholar with Distinction – granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

PSAT NATIONAL AWARDS

- National Hispanic Scholar
- National Merit Commended Student
- National Merit Finalist
- National Merit Scholar
- National Merit Semifinalist

EMPLOYMENT

Being employed during high school is admirable; moreover, colleges love to see it on applications. Having a job for a consistent period of time indicates you are responsible, hardworking, and able to manage your time. Being able to hold a part-time or summer job shows maturity, sacrifice, and teamwork. For example, if you plan to be a pediatrician, being a lifeguard in the summers could be a successful college essay about learning patience and working with children and parents.

Working consistently throughout high school and being promoted at your workplace would be considered an honor worthy of mention on your college application.

CREATING A COLLEGE LIST

Creating your college list should be fun! Start your list by adding schools you’ve always thought about attending. By the time you are a senior, I’d like for you to have created a list of 20 colleges that you have discovered through your family’s recommendations, your own discovery and interest, and, of course, research. Research using the online resources provided by CCS but also talk to your family, your teachers, and other adults who you respect.

Look up the college’s motto or mission statement and see if you fit that college’s motto.

Waverly Wang, CCS, Class of 2019; Current student at Harvey Mudd College

If you like to hold a book in your hand, highlight, and write in the margins, these college guides are updated regularly and are known to be the best to help you find colleges for your college list.

OLD SCHOOL COLLEGE GUIDES

<u>The Fiske Guide to Colleges</u>	Regarded as the best college guide in regard to the top 10% of colleges
<u>The Ultimate Guide to America’s Best Colleges</u>	Describes more than 300 colleges with a student’s perspective of each college’s strengths and weaknesses
<u>The Insider’s Guide to Colleges</u>	It is published for students by students. If you can’t visit all the colleges you would like, it is the next best thing to being there. The latest version was published in 2015.
<u>The College Handbook</u>	The “BIG” college guide containing information on more than 2200 U.S. colleges

I learned hard and fast that what may seem like a great and amazing college choice on paper may be the worst choice if you do not ask the hard questions and also VISIT the campus! VISIT, VISIT, VISIT. I cannot emphasize this enough. After you tour any campus ask yourself honestly, “Do I see myself here?” If that answer is no, then definitely don’t! That definitely saved me in the long run and eventually what led me personally to choose Dallas Baptist University during my senior year at CCS!!

Nate Childs, CCS, Class of 2015; Dallas Baptist University, Class of 2019

CAMPUS CULTURE QUIZ

If you absolutely don't have a clue where to start, this quiz might help you identify the kind of college experience you are seeking. I adapted this quiz from Joyce Slaton Mitchell, a top college advisor with 35 years of experience.

1. If all of these clubs were available to you, which one would be your favorite?
 - a. Academic Club
 - b. Environmental Club
 - c. Intramural Sports Club
 - d. Philosophy Club
 - e. Music or Drama Club

2. You're planning the weekend with your friends. Which of these choices would you not want to miss?
 - a. a music concert with thousands of fans in attendance
 - b. an information session about being an exchange student in another country
 - c. an arts festival
 - d. the finals of the Google science fair competition
 - e. a special showing of the Sundance Film Festival documentary winner about climate change

3. What has consistently been your favorite class in high school?
 - a. Art, music, dance class
 - b. Science classes, like biology, chemistry, & physics
 - c. Social science classes such as psychology, human geography, sociology
 - d. History classes
 - e. English literature classes

4. What kind of student are you?
 - a. I like to discuss what I've learned in small study groups.
 - b. I need time to ponder what I've learned, sometimes with others and sometimes by myself.
 - c. I like to study in a quiet place by myself until I really understand.
 - d. I like to get through my homework quickly and have plenty of time to be with my friends.
 - e. I study my favorite subjects and don't mind winging it once in a while for the rest.

5. What's your favorite sport or recreation activity?
 - a. The Gym: treadmill, elliptical, rowing machine, weights
 - b. Outdoors: Biking, Hiking/Walking, Running, Kayaking
 - c. Team Sports: Football, Basketball, Baseball, Soccer
 - d. A Mix: I just like to be active.
 - e. Yoga, Barre, dance

6. What do you consider your best quality to highlight on your college applications?
 - a. Intellectual Curiosity
 - b. Imagination
 - c. Work Ethic
 - d. Compassion
 - e. Loyalty

7. When you think about Saturday night at college, what would you not want to miss?
 - a. Serving with others in ways to benefit the community
 - b. Cheering for my college football team at the home game
 - c. Sitting in the audience at the college-sponsored Ted Talk with a famous philosopher as the keynote speaker
 - d. Attending the musical produced by my college's theater department
 - e. Networking at an event for medical research internships

8. You are filling out housing forms for your sophomore year in college. Where will you want to live?
 - a. An apartment close to campus
 - b. Dorms on campus
 - c. Fraternity or Sorority House
 - d. Living & Learning Center on campus (usually based on similar majors living together)
 - e. An apartment close to downtown and the city's hot spots

9. Imagine walking on your college campus during a snow storm, what are you talking about?
 - a. Planning a road trip with friends to hit the nearest slopes
 - b. Debating whether or not the anticipated guest speaker, former Vice-President Mike Pence, will be able to make the trip to campus.
 - c. Wondering if the weather will hurt attendance at the college's photography exhibit
 - d. Capitalizing on the opportunity by selling pizza and snacks to those students stuck in the dorm
 - e. Desiring to help at a local community shelter as you know it will be busier than usual.

10. What kind of friends do you hope to have when you get to college?
 - a. Open-minded friends who like to go to performances and art galleries
 - b. Serious and goal-oriented friends who are in college to get ahead in the world
 - c. Friends who take action for social justice
 - d. Large group of friends who show up at football games and know how to have a good time
 - e. Small group of friends who'd rather socialize with a few than party with a crowd

CAMPUS CULTURE QUIZ KEY

Circle each letter you chose for all ten questions. Then go down each vertical color column, starting with question one through ten, and give yourself ten points for each letter you chose. Add them up! Match your scores with the campus culture descriptions below.

	RED	PURPLE	BLUE	GOLD	GREEN
1	c	d	e	a	b
2	a	b	c	d	e
3	d	e	a	b	c
4	e	a	b	c	d
5	c	d	e	a	b
6	e	a	b	c	d
7	b	c	d	e	a
8	c	d	e	a	b
9	a	b	c	d	e
10	d	e	a	b	c

For example, let's say you have 7 red, 2 gold, and 1 blue.

That would be 70% Collegiate, 20% Pre-professional, and 10% Creative.

RED = COLLEGIATE

This a campus culture where you and your friends will find big sports, Greek life (fraternities and sororities), and a fun social life. A few examples include: University of Arkansas, University of Oklahoma, University of Texas, Duke, Northwestern, Georgetown, Vanderbilt, or smaller and collegiate such as Baylor, Colgate, Denison, and Wake Forest.

PURPLE = INTELLECTUAL

This is a campus culture where you will spend your time talking about books you've read, where you will continue your discussions from class, argue and debate about academics, politics, and economics. A few examples include: Bard, Carleton, Chicago, Grinnell, Hendrix, Pomona, Swarthmore.

BLUE = CREATIVE

This is a campus culture where you and your friends will talk, laugh, and probably sing between classes. You will talk about the arts, practice sessions, gallery openings, fashion, and upcoming performances. A few examples include: Conservatories like Juilliard and Oberlin or design schools such as Rhode Island School of Design, Savannah School of Arts and Design, Vassar; locally, Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) @ UCO.

GOLD = PRE-PROFESSIONAL

This is a campus culture where you and your friends talk between classes and in the dorms about GPAs, MCATs, GREs, medical and law school, business, engineering, and architecture. A few examples include Cornell, UNC, University of Pennsylvania, Rice, Stanford, Wharton, MIT, Berkeley, University of Illinois.

GREEN = ACTIVISM

This is a campus culture where your friends and you will protest, organize, demonstrate, boycott, and talk about human rights, animal rights, environmental and climate issues between classes. A few examples include Grinnell, Haverford, Oberlin, Pitzer, Wesleyan.

Knowing what kind of campus culture you desire will help you develop your college list. If you like the small school feel, then a large university won't give you the campus culture you want.

CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

As someone who values Christian education, don't eliminate Christian colleges from your list. If a Christian environment is something you are seeking in a college, then find the one that is the

best fit for you. Take a look at Anderson University, Baylor, Calvin College, College of the Ozarks, Dallas Baptist University, Gordon College, John Brown University, Liberty, Messiah, Pepperdine, Samford, and Wheaton. Locally, there is Oklahoma Christian, Southern Nazarene, Oklahoma Baptist University, and Oral Roberts. All of these colleges can provide an excellent education and excellent college experience in a Christian environment.

I wish I would've known how secular the college I went to actually was.

Cade Nelson, CCS, Class of 2013; Hendrix College, Class of 2018

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE PROS & CONS

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE PROS	CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CONS
You will generally be surrounded by people who have similar Christian values and beliefs.	You will be surrounded by people who have similar values and beliefs. This could lead to a naïve view of the world and perhaps even arrogance towards others.
You most likely won't be forced to compartmentalize your faith from the rest of life. If the Christian college you are attending is doing it right, they will help you in the process of integration and worldview formation.	Struggle and adversity are one of the best catalysts for spiritual growth. It will be popular to be a Christian. You won't encounter resistance or hardship on account of your beliefs.
You will be taught from a Christian worldview by professors who are Christians. This is an amazing opportunity that few people get.	You may not be exposed with sufficient rigor to the ideas you will encounter upon graduation.
You will be prepared for certain types of ministry in ways that you wouldn't be trained in a secular school.	Depending on your career path, people may not regard your degree as highly as someone who attended a secular school.

SECULAR COLLEGE PROS & CONS

SECULAR COLLEGE PROS	SECULAR COLLEGE CONS
It most likely will not be popular to be a Christian. As a result, it will cost you something to follow Christ and your faith will be strengthened.	You run the risk of being inundated and overcome with ideas hostile to your Christian worldview. This could lead to a crisis in faith.
You have the opportunity to be salt and light on your campus – it is a mission field at your doorstep.	While temptations can be found anywhere, temptations are especially intense and explicit at a secular school.
You have the opportunity to interact with professors and ideas that you would usually not be exposed to at a Christian school. Experiencing diversity is a good thing.	If you don't find a solid group of Christian students or a ministry to plug into, then you will become increasingly isolated. It is much more difficult to stay faithful to Christ and grow spiritually if you are alone.
Where you go after college—the workplace or graduate school—will probably respect a degree from a prestigious secular school more than one from a Christian liberal arts college.	You will not have the benefit of taking classes that are friendly toward Biblical Christianity.

YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH

Did you know that only 60% of students who start college in the U.S. finish college in six years? This is not good and definitely not The CCS Way. Sadly, even if a student doesn't get a degree, he still owes the money borrowed. I do not want this to be you.

Many students select colleges based on feelings. Of course, I want you to go to college where you feel great, but I also want you to know what you are buying.

Knowing how to search for colleges is important. We will be using SCOIR as CCS's official college searching tool, but there are several excellent tools available.

If you love data, the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) is a site you will enjoy.

The [College Scorecard](#) link provides important information about average annual cost, the graduation rate, and the average salary after graduating. Its purpose is to help you make informed choices not emotional ones.

For example, do you want to bet your college education on Becker College in Worcester, MA, where you can expect to pay \$132,000 for four years with a 37% graduation rate and an average starting salary of \$44,000 per year. For the record, I have nothing against Becker College, but the data speaks for itself.

Numbers and statistics aren't quite the same as watching funny videos on YouTube but showing your parents this site and what you've learned will definitely impress them!

Start by entering colleges you currently have on your list and visit the [College Scorecard](#).

For example, let's say you currently have Baylor, College of Charleston, Oklahoma State University, Pepperdine, and The University of Tulsa on your college list so far. What does the [College Scorecard](#) say statistically about these colleges?

LET'S COMPARE SOME COLLEGES USING COLLEGE SCORECARD

	BAYLOR	COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON	OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY	PEPPERDINE	UNIVERSITY OF TULSA
Average Annual Tuition Costs*	\$41,000	\$13,000 in-state \$33,000 out-of-state	\$21,000	\$43,000	\$27,000
Graduation Rate**	75%	69%	62%	86%	71%
Salary After Attending***	\$52,000	\$40,000	\$47,000	\$65,500	\$48,500

*The average annual tuition costs are based on family's making \$110,000 or more

**The graduation rate is the share of students who graduate within 150% of the expected time to graduation (typically 6 years for schools that typically award 4-year degrees)

***The median earnings of former students who received federal financial aid, at ten years after beginning at that school.

Let's break this data down.

Take a look at College of Charleston's statistics. Just understanding that the out-of-state tuition is almost \$20,000 more per year than in-state residents might make you think twice about applying. In addition, recognizing that the 'salary after attending' statistic is lower than the other schools on your list, might be a potential stop sign for you. Understand that I love the College of Charleston. If money wasn't a consideration, I'd go back and be a student there today. However, I might want to keep it as a vacation destination and not my college choice.

YOUR COLLEGE VISITS

I want you to visit colleges. The best way to know a college is to spend time on campus. The campus visit will probably have the greatest impact on your college choice. But it's impossible to visit all 2,500+ colleges across the United States, so doing your research to know where to visit is important. A college that is perfect for you will not only support your academic goals, but it will also be your home away from home. Keep in mind that there is probably no one perfect college for you – there are probably several!

If you're genuinely interested in a college, make sure you visit it. Try to talk to current students about what people are most commonly involved with, student organizations, churches, all that stuff. It may seem like class difficulty is most important, but you really want to know where you can get plugged in!

Scott Richards, CCS, Class of 2016; Texas A & M, Class of 2020

VIRTUAL CAMPUS TOURS

If you can't visit a college campus (*or the campus is closed due to a nationwide pandemic*), there are other ways to tour a college. Use sites [Campus Tours](#), [You Visit](#) and [Campus Reel](#) to connect to colleges and take virtual tours.

Here are some additional tips:

- Go to the college's website – easily find every college imaginable through SCOIR, CCS's college planning program;
- Visit their social media and interact with actual students. You can learn almost everything about a particular school by researching their [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#),

and [Facebook](#) pages. Here you can also get a better sense for the college's brand and what really makes them unique.

- Go to the college review sites such as [Niche](#) or [Unigo](#), but do so objectively. These review forms are great places to find both amazing qualities of a particular college and also learn about areas for concern! Every college has its positive and negative qualities. Think of a college website like a beautiful, glossy brochure. They are showing off all of the positives about their college. The review sites provide nitty-gritty truths, but they are also a place for students to air their complaints. Read the reviews with a critical eye.
- Get in contact with the admissions officers at the colleges you are sincerely interested in. Colleges are happy to respond to your questions via email or phone. If you want to understand what services you can get at the career center or the most popular classes for your major, **directly contact the people** in the Admissions Office, Career Center, Disability Services, or Student Success Services to gain understanding. College is a big business. The colleges WANT to help you.
- Don't forget to research the college town, too. SCOIR has a search tool allowing you to pick the kind of location you desire for your college. If you want a big city atmosphere, you are not going to want a college in a rural town.

LIVE, IN-PERSON COLLEGE CAMPUS TOURS

THINGS TO DO & CONSIDER:

1. To schedule a college visit, go to the college's admissions page. Typically, there is a link where you can electronically schedule a tour. If you would prefer to call, a phone number will be provided.
2. Forward your confirmation email to CCS to assure it's a documented absence. At CCS, freshmen are given one documented college visit absence per year; sophomores, two; juniors, three, and seniors, four.
3. Don't make your first college visit the college you think is your favorite. You'll get better at visiting colleges with practice. When you visit your favorite college last, you'll be in the best position to make comparisons to others you've visited.
4. College visits are family time. You should schedule visits with your parents.

5. Schedule your visit when the college is in session. You won't get a realistic idea of campus life in July or over Christmas break.
6. Take the official campus tour. It gives the school a chance to highlight their top programs and show off its best features. You also get the chance to check out bulletin boards and pick up a school newspaper to get a sense of campus culture.
7. After the tour, venture out on your own. The official tour will probably show off the best part of campus. If there are facilities that are important to you (maybe fitness facilities, first-year dorms, dining halls) that you didn't see, seek them out.

BEFORE YOU GO:

- Have a general understanding of the admission requirements; print the maps and parking information so you'll have it ready to go
- Make a list of things that impress you from the website as well as the things you have questions about. After the visit, this list can be used to verify your initial impressions.
- Request to visit a class or specific department that interests you. A tour of the campus does not necessarily include visiting a class, so you'll need to ask for it.

DURING THE TOUR:

- General appearance of the campus: *Well-maintained or needs work?*
- Student attire: *Do I look like I could fit in here? Is it a "jeans and t-shirt" campus or a "khakis and polo shirt" campus?*
- Friendliness: *Do people make eye contact? Do they offer help easily?*
- Transportation: *What's the parking like?*
- Faculty Presence: *Are the professors' office doors open? Do you notice any professor/student interaction?*
- Library, Laboratories, and Technology Facilities: *Hours? Easy Access? Modern? Out-Dated?*
- Dorms: *Security? Single-sex or Coed?*
- Dining Facilities: *Hours? Options?*
- Campus Security: *Lighting? Security officers around campus? Emergency Phones?*

WHEN VISITING A CLASS:

- How many students are in the class?
- Does class begin on time?
- Does the professor seem prepared?
- Is a lecture-based class or Socratic (discussed-based)?
- Do you think you would be challenged in this class?
- If you get to visit with a professor, ask her about internships in your major field of study. What three companies recruit the majority of graduates in your field?

WHEN VISITING WITH STUDENTS:

- Ask them if most students stay on campus on the weekend?
- How many hours a week do you typically study?
- Where do you study most of the time?
- Is it easy to get enrolled in the classes you want to take?
- What percentage of first year or core curriculum classes are taught by graduate assistants or teaching assistants?
- Where are the hangouts?
- What do you most like about this college?
- What was your biggest surprise when you got here?

ASK YOURSELF:

- Do you see yourself on this campus?
- Do you see people you'd like to have as friends?
- Did you meet professors you'd like to learn from?

If you can't answer 'yes' to all three of these questions, keep looking!

AFTER THE TOUR:

- Be sure and jot down your impressions of the tour. I have a checklist you might find useful, but I find most students take notes on their phones.

- Send a quick thank you email (a handwritten note would even be better) to admissions thanking them for the tour. Politeness always stands out.
- If you have any follow-up questions, reach out to the admissions office. See the section “How to E-mail College Admissions” below.

COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Because you are the student and potential applicant, you should be the one communicating with the college admissions office.

Here are some tips on communicating well.

- Introduce yourself. Give your name, high school graduation year, name and city of your high school and your home address either in the body of the e-mail or as an e-mail signature. This information helps the admissions office place you and where you are in the application process
- Keep it short. Focus on your questions.
- Make sure the answers to your questions aren’t easily accessible on the school’s website.
- Check for spelling and grammatical mistakes. You don’t need to be overly formal, but you need to show you can write a professional email.
- While you are at it, check your privacy settings. Just as you check out colleges on social media, admissions officers could just as well be doing some research on you. Present your best self.

DEMONSTRATING INTEREST

“Demonstrated Interest” is exactly what it sounds like and is defined as — doing something that explicitly shows interest in a college, outside of the application. Not all colleges consider demonstrated interest important. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) puts out a report every year on the state of college admissions, and the most recent report cites that 13.7% of colleges consider demonstrated interest of considerable importance. Another 25.5% said that it has moderate importance. Outside of the colleges listed below, there are plenty that also consider demonstrated interested when making admission decisions, but these colleges deem it either important or very important. On the plus side, it can’t hurt to show demonstrated interest, so may as well follow some social media accounts, open some emails, and join a webinar or two!

Remember: As much as you like feeling special, colleges and universities like to feel special, too!

Not all colleges disclose whether it's important or not, but some do. The following are known to consider demonstrated interest in the admissions process: Here is a list of [colleges that track demonstrated interest](#).

WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE INTEREST

- **Follow and interact with the college or university on social media(s).** Seriously. Simply following a college on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter is considered demonstrating interest.
- **Open and read emails.** You may not be particularly interested in what that particular email has to say, but colleges use systems that let them know who opened what email, and even who clicked the links inside of it. If the email is from a college you want to get into, open it, click a link or two, and *bam!*, you've demonstrated interest.
- **Attend informational sessions and webinars.** Sign up for an informational session or webinar and attend. You just want your name to pop up on their screens.
- **Visit the school.** Whether you do this virtually or in-person doesn't matter — again, you just want to be on the admissions office's radar, and this is another way to do that
- **Email an admissions officer.** This one comes with a major caveat, though. **Make sure you have a good question or reason for emailing.** If you don't, you're just spamming the admissions office and they won't look upon that too kindly. If you have a good reason, make sure you use an email with a professional address, use complete sentences, address the admissions officer correctly, and sign off with your full name.

YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

When you create the list of colleges where you are going to apply, you need to understand your chances of being accepted and also the restrictions determined by your parents. If they have a certain amount of money to spend on your college education, then you need to know before you apply. If you are eligible for the Oklahoma's Promise Scholarship, then you need to limit your college search to Oklahoma.

By the beginning of your senior year, have several 'first choice' colleges where you plan to apply.

When finalizing the list of colleges where you will apply, consider:

1. Have I considered the restrictions (financial, geographic) my parents have provided?
2. Do I have the qualifications to be accepted?
3. Can I see myself living my best life there?

During your senior year when Camp College rolls around in August, I'd like for you to know where you will be applying. Having several 'first choice' colleges will set you up for a positive and encouraging senior year.

This guide is not going to cover all of the facets of completing college applications. Camp College will get you well-prepared for the ins and outs of college applications.

FINANCIAL AID

Money provided to you and your parents to help for your education is financial aid. Major forms of financial aid include gift aid (grants and scholarships) and self-help aid (loans and work-study). You want as much gift aid as possible.

Money that you don't have to pay back, also known as gift aid, comes in the form of grants and scholarships. You want as many grants and scholarships as possible.

The hardest part of financing college is taking the emotions out of it and focusing on the numbers. *Controlling college costs is especially important for the majority of our CCS families – average middle- to-upper class families – who won't qualify for need-based financial aid.*

Once you are accepted to a college, you will be assigned a financial aid officer. Although this may not be announced in a formal way on the college's end, all students are assigned a person to review your child's financial paperwork. This person can be very helpful in helping you understand your financial aid package. Parents are encouraged to contact your financial aid officer as well. Since your parents are paying a majority of your tuition, they have a right to know what's going on.

*You need to ask this question to your mom & dad --
 “How much are you willing or able to pay for college and how much responsibility will fall on me?”*

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES	
Oklahoma-Specific Help	UCanGo2.org
FinAid – Everything financial aid	FinAid.org
Federal Student Aid for Students	www.studentaid.ed.gov
Student Loans	www.studentloans.org
Financial Aid Calculators	www.finaid.org/calculators

SIX WAYS COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES AWARD FINANCIAL AID

- 1. Standard Package** – Colleges in this category offer the majority of their students only the federal funds they can receive at any properly accredited and Federal Student Aid eligible institution. Information on the college’s website is usually geared toward very high-achieving students. Look for clues online: Do students have to achieve a 3.5 GPA or higher, possibly a higher GPA and higher ACT or SAT score, to be able to apply for the limited number of scholarships offered by the college?
- 2. Institutional Commitment Package** – These schools have decided on their own to try to cut the cost of higher education. Students who meet certain criteria are offered significant funding. On the college websites and when meeting with students, college officials say they will meet “full need” or refer to their institution as a “limited loan” or “no loan” college. Funds from the school are awarded to students in addition to any federal funds they receive. Typically, colleges that use institutional commitment packages have a large number of applicants. These colleges tend to be highly selective and admit a small percentage of students who apply for admission.
- 3. Upfront Discount Package** – These colleges tend to use their site to advertise the scholarships they offer. A chart showing scholarship options may be available and college officials may even provide prospective students with an early estimate of their financial aid award based on family

income. This can help take the guesswork out of the scholarship process. While being a high academic achiever can help applicants win scholarships at these colleges, students may also be awarded scholarships based on other factors. Schools following this method show parents what to expect and manage expectations before the first financial aid award letter is processed.

- 4. We Will Negotiate Package** – Colleges that use this approach know their competitors and want to enroll students they feel are a great match for the institution. They are aware of and attempt to accommodate the financial needs of students and families. In addition to federal financial aid, these colleges may provide scholarships or grants from their own funding source. Some schools in this category may even advertise up front that they will negotiate with students who have been admitted to one of their competitors.
- 5. Heavy Borrowing Package** – Colleges in this group tend to have a high cost and limited scholarship funding. A small scholarship may be offered that does not make a significant contribution toward the total cost of attendance. Students usually have to borrow maximum loans and parents are also routinely asked to also take out a loan. Some schools in this category offer monthly payment plans. They may also award additional institutional funds to those students who bring local scholarships to the college.
- 6. Low-Cost, High-Quality Institution Package** – Some institutions—including community colleges and some state universities—are affordable because their tuition and fees are lower to begin with. It is this distinction (not the institution’s financial aid packages) that typically make these colleges attractive to families. Institutions in this category tend to follow the standard package model. Students have access to federal financial aid, but applicants are less likely to receive institutional grants or scholarships. Scholarship information on college websites is usually targeted at high-achieving students. Links to national scholarships may also be available.

WHAT KIND OF AID IS AVAILABLE?

STATE GRANTS	Usually based on financial need, state grants don’t need to be paid back.
SCHOLARSHIPS	Scholarships don’t need to be paid back, and there is a wide variety of them available.
FEDERAL GRANTS	Federal grants are based on financial need. Most do not need to be paid back. The FAFSA must be submitted for consideration.

FEDERAL WORK-STUDY	Earn money for your education by working part- time, usually at your institution. The FAFSA must be submitted for consideration.
FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS	Offered at low interest rates, some are based on financial need and some aren't. All loans must be paid back. The FAFSA must be submitted for consideration.
"PRIVATE" or "ALTERNATIVE" STUDENT LOANS	Private loans are another option for students. These may have less flexible repayment terms than federal loans, so you must do your homework.

STATE GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

OKLAHOMA TUITION AID GRANT (OTAG)	OTAG is a program that provides grant assistance for OK residents who meet certain financial requirements. The grant may be used at OK public colleges and universities, technology centers or eligible private institutions within the state.
OKLAHOMA TUITION EQUALIZATION GRANT (OTEG)	OTEG awards grant to OK students attending eligible OK not-for-profit private or independent institutions. Family income cannot exceed \$50,000.
OKLAHOMA'S PROMISE	Students must apply in the 8th, 9th, 10th grade, be a resident of Oklahoma, complete a specific high school curriculum, achieve at least a 2.5GPA both in the curriculum and overall, and abide by certain conduct standards. The federal adjusted gross income of the student's family may not exceed \$55,000 at the time of application (special income provisions may apply to children adopted from certain court-ordered custody, children in the custody of court-appointed guardians and families received Social Security disability and death benefits.) The federal adjusted gross income of the student's family may also not exceed \$100,000 each year the student is enrolled in postsecondary education. OK's Promise will pay resident tuition at a public college or a portion of tuition at private institutions or public technology centers in OK. Learn more at okpromise.org
ACADEMIC SCHOLARS PROGRAM	The Academic Scholars Program awards scholarships to OK residents who score at or above the 99.5 percentile on the ACT or SAT exam and to students who are named National Merit Scholars or finalists, Presidential Scholars or Institutional Nominees.
FUTURE TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP	Maximum Award \$1500

GEORGE AND DONNA NIGHT PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP	Maximum Award \$1000
REGIONAL UNIVERSITY BACCALAUREATE SCHOLARSHIP	Maximum Award \$3000

FEDERAL AID (GRANTS, WORK-STUDY, LOANS)

GRANTS	Grants are free money and don't need to be repaid.
FEDERAL PELL GRANT	Available to qualifying undergraduates.
FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (FSEOG)	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need.
TEACHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE for COLLEGE and HIGHER EDUCATION (TEACH) GRANT	For students taking course work necessary to become a teacher.
IRAQ and AFGHANISTAN SERVICE GRANT	For students whose parent or guardian died as a result of a military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after the event of 9/11/2001.
LOANS	Loan must be repaid, so students should borrow only what they need.
DIRECT SUBSIDIZED LOAN	A need-based loan for undergraduate students. The U.S. Department of Education pays the interest while the borrower is in school.
DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN	A non-need based loan for undergraduate students. The borrower is responsible for all interest costs.
DIRECT PLUS LOAN	A non-need based loan for parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate or professional students. The borrower is responsible for all interest costs.
WORK-STUDY	The Work-Study program provides part-time jobs at approved sites for students with financial need, allowing to earn money to help pay tuition and other expenses at their college.

I wouldn't have just looked at tuition cost when making my decision. Lots of schools that would cost 60k+ a year have financial aid guaranteed and then you can always ask for more. Look for colleges that advertise meeting "100% demonstrated need." Also email their financial aid departments and ask what kinds of scholarships you qualify for. Vassar had a scholarship specifically for a "woman from Oklahoma (or the south, if no one from Oklahoma was available). Guess who was the only person who qualified for that money my first 3 years at Vassar?"

Candace Osterhout, CCS, Class of 2015; Vassar, Class of 2019

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

The most important acronym in the college admission process is **FAFSA – Free Application for Financial Student Aid**. All colleges require students seeking financial aid to complete the FAFSA. October 1 of your senior year is “opening day” for the FAFSA. You and your parents should sit down together and complete it. The FAFSA requires parents to use the prior-prior tax years for financial aid review.

Parents: The taxes you file when your child is a junior in high school will be the first tax year used for review by college aid offices.

Financial aid offices require students to fill out a FAFSA each year for which they are applying for aid in college.

The FAFSA is a free form (www.fafsa.gov) created by the government. The FAFSA is income-driven in its questions. The FAFSA is a single-year review of income and uses custodial parent (and spouse) information.

On October 1st of your senior year, plan to sit down with your parents and complete the FAFSA.

If you are applying to more selective schools, you might be required to complete an additional financial aid review process called the **CCS Profile**. The CCS Profile, run by College Board, charges a fee for the initial set-up and then more to send it to each college. The CCS Profile is asset-driven in its questions and reviews multiple years of income. It also uses custodial and non-custodial parent (and spouses) information.

FAFSA & CSS PROFILE

FAFSA	CSS PROFILE
Free, government run	Charges a fee for initial set-up and then more to send it to each college
Income-driven in its questions	Asset-driven in its questions
Single-Year Review	Multiple-year review of income
Only uses custodial parent (and spouse) info	Uses custodial and non-custodial parent (and spouses) information

SCHOLARSHIPS

Money that doesn't have to be paid back is a scholarship. You want to get as many scholarships as you can. Your parents want you to get as many scholarships as you can as well! There are lots of legitimate sources to find scholarships; the most scholarship money is going to come from the college you will be attending.

Colleges are the number one provider of free college money. Outside scholarships should be seen as bonuses.

Scholarship Scam Warning Signs:

- “The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”
- “You can't get this information anywhere else.”
- “I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.”
- “We'll do all the work. You just pay a processing fee.”
- “The scholarship will cost some money.”
- “You've been selected” by a “national foundation” to receive a scholarship – or “You're a finalist” in a contest you never entered.

GENERAL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS	SPECIALIZED SCHOLARSHIPS
College-scholarships.com	AFB.org (vision loss)
FastWeb.com	
Scholarsnapp.org	Blackscholarships.org
Petersons.com	DiabetesScholars.org
Scholarships.com	FTTTF.org (burn survivors)
Scholarships360.org	GMSP.org (Gates Millennium Scholars)
HighFiveScholarships.com	HSF.net (Hispanic Scholarship Fund)
Chegg.com/scholarships	IEFA.org (international)
www.Goodcall.com/Scholarships	InternationalScholarships.com
BigFuture.collegeboard.org	JackieRobinson.org (minority students)
www.ScholarshipMonkey.com	LifeHappens.org (family death)
StudentScholarshipSearch.com	StudentScholarshipSearch.com/Ethnicity
CollegeXpress.com	NationalIMSSociety.org (MS)
Unigo.com	APIAScholars.org (Asian and Pacific Islander)
MyScholly.com (CCS gifts seniors who participate in Camp College this app for a year.)	RiseScholarshipFoundation.org (learning disabilities)
	Sertoma.org (hearing impaired)
	StudentsWithHeart.org (heart disease)
OCCF.org – Oklahoma Community Foundation	UCBEpilepsyScholarship.com (epilepsy)
OKcollegestart.org	UNCF.org (minority students)
	VietScholarships.org (Vietnamese)
TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIPS	
AStribe.com (Absentee Shawnee)	OsageNation-nsn.gov
Bahkoje.com (Iowa)	PawneeNation.org
C-A-Tribes.org (Cheyenne-Arapaho)	PeoriaTribe.com
Cherokee.org	Ponca.com
Chickasaw.net	Potawatomi.org
ChoctawNation.com	QuapawTribe.com
ComancheNation.com	SacandFoxNation-nsn.gov
DelawareTribe.org	SCTribe.com (Seneca-Cayuga)
KawNation.com	Shawnee-Tribe.com

KickapooTribeofOklahoma.com	Sno-nsn.gov (Seminole)
MiamiNation.com	WichitaTribe.com
McN-nsn.gov (Muscogee/Creek)	Wyandotte-Nation.org

SPECIAL PROGRAMS: ATHLETICS, FINE ARTS, MILITARY, & GAP YEAR

ATHLETICS IN COLLEGE – NCAA and NAIA

Most athletes think NCAA when thinking college athletics. Know that there is more than just NCAA, if you want to play college sports. The NAIA (National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics) is the oldest college athletics body. The NAIA is comprised mostly in smaller colleges and administrates championships in 25 sports: Basketball, Baseball, Cross Country, Football, Soccer, Track & Field, Swimming & Diving, Softball, Wrestling, Volleyball (women’s only) and Competitive Cheer/Dance.

Lacrosse and Men’s Volleyball are coming soon.

Scholarship money is available for NAIA athletes as well.

Don’t just think NCAA when thinking about playing college sports. Look into the NAIA as well.

If you want to play college sports, you need to do the following

- 1. Read the NCAA’s College-Bound Athletic Guide** and the NAIA’S College-Bound Athlete Guide. Know the differences between the NCAA and NAIA.
- 2. Get an unofficial copy of your transcript.** CCS can provide an unofficial copy of your transcript in hard copy form and/or in PDF form. Most coaches prefer an electronic PDF copy of your unofficial transcript.
- 3. Create an athletic resumé.** An athletic resumé gives college coaches all the information they need to make an initial assessment.
- 4. Make a short and sweet highlight tape.** Highlight videos should be short (no more than 4 – 5 minutes) and have time dedicated to both skill demonstration and game clips where you

can be easily identified.

5. **Fill out the college's prospective student-athlete questionnaire.** This questionnaire is usually located on a college's official athletic website.
6. **Create a tracking document.** Create a spreadsheet to keep track of the programs and coaches you reach out to. Some information to track -- name of college, coach's name and contact information, date of initial communication, date of coach's response, date of highlight video/athletic resumé sen. This will help you stay in consistent contact with coaches.
7. **Register for the NCAA Eligibility Center and/or NAIA Eligibility Center in the sophomore year (no later than junior year).**

ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

NCAA Divisions I and II schools provide athletics scholarships. Division III schools do not offer athletics scholarships.

HEAD-COUNT SCHOLARSHIPS

There are six Division I sports that only offer a full-ride scholarship to their athletes: football, men's and women's basketball, tennis, women's gymnastics, and women's volleyball. The sports listed above can only offer a full-ride athletic scholarship or nothing. As a result, a lot of athletes are walk-ons and have other awards to help offset the cost of tuition.

PARTIAL OR EQUIVALENCY MODEL SCHOLARSHIPS

At the NCAA D-I and D-II level, depending on the sport, coaches can provide athletes with partial scholarships. All scholarships within the NAIA are equivalency scholarships. Even though a program can give out partial scholarships, this doesn't mean they can't offer a full-ride athletic scholarship. Coaches want to have a full roster, so they don't often give full-ride athletic scholarships. Additionally, providing athletic aid to a larger number of athletes ensures more participation. Just because an athlete hasn't earned a full-ride athletic scholarship doesn't mean they can't receive a full-ride to college. With the equivalency model, athletes can combine multiple scholarships awards and financial aid, which can equal a full-ride.

POSITION BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

Some positions receive more scholarship money because of the impact it has on a program. For

instance, a softball or baseball pitcher typically receive more scholarship money than an outfielder or a first baseman. The same goes for a goalie in soccer or a track sprinter. Regardless, it's up to the coach to determine which positions and players receive an athletic scholarship and for what amount. Every team and coach distributes their scholarship money differently. Our advice is to research your position and find out what the average scholarship amount is, and you'll know what to expect.

Only about 2% of high school athletes are awarded athletics scholarships to compete in college.

FINE ARTS

A fine arts college is a school that educates students in the visual or performing arts. Almost every college has some kind of art department where students can earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in a variety of mediums. But, at an art school, every class will involve art in some way. Your admission to a competitive fine arts school will be based, in part, upon review of traditional criteria such as your grade point average, level of coursework, test scores, essays, and interviews. However, for most professional colleges, whether it is a music school, dance school, or theater college, the evaluation of your portfolio or your audition will supersede the review of all other criteria for admission. Many visual arts colleges even prescreen potential applicants by reviewing portfolios prior to application in order to determine eligibility for admission. This process usually occurs during senior year and can give you valuable guidance early in the admission process (in other words, you'll know which schools not to apply to!) This helps colleges create a more targeted pool of applicants and is also the reason that acceptance rates at many performing and visual arts schools appear to be higher than other selective institutions.

SOME THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT APPLYING TO ART SCHOOL

- There's a difference between "art school" and schools with art programs. Almost every college has some kind of art department where students can earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in a variety of mediums. But, at an art school, every class will involve art in some way.
- Grades and ACT/SAT scores still matter.
- Every application requires a portfolio for art schools.
- Auditions will be required for performance schools.

- Interviews are crucial.
- Expect to write essays.

Here's a list of the [top fine arts colleges](#) !

MILITARY

MILITARY ACADEMIES

42,664 people applied to the five military academies (Airforce, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, Naval, West Point) for the Class of 2022. However, there are only about 4,100 slots available each year. That's an acceptance rate of 9.6%. This kind of acceptance rate is similar to most competitive Ivy League schools.

- 1. Get the best grades you can.** Focus on taking as much science and math as offered. Academies focus heavily on *STEM-related majors*.
- 2. Get a high ACT or SAT score.** This is critical. Think *at least* 1,260 to 1,300 on SAT or an ACT score of *at least* 29 to 31. Those are considered “average” marks for most years, so higher scores are even better.
- 3. Be an athlete.** Depending on the academy, 85% or more of all appointees earn a varsity letter in high school, which should tell you something about the type of young men and women the service academies want. Couch potatoes need not apply!
- 4. Be a leader.** Think sports team captain; club founder or officer; Eagle Scout or Gold Award recipient; student body or class officer; Boys State or Girls State delegate; and Editor of the school newspaper or yearbook.
- 5. Be involved in the community.**
- 6. Ace the interview.**
- 7. Know your Congressman or Congresswoman.** You need an official nomination to get into the academies (except the Coast Guard Academy). These come from Senators, Congressmen, the Vice President and the President. Apply to all the sources but get to personally know the ones you can. Volunteer in their office. Write them letters. Make appointments to see them.
- 8. Go for more than one.** Congressman and Senators have a limited number of nominations for each academy. By considering all four academies you increase your chances of getting in.

9. Attend a summer program. The academies have summer programs providing a taste of what the full military academy experience would be. Attending a summer academy is an excellent way to demonstrate interest.

10. Start investigating your interest as a freshman or sophomore. While official applications don't start until your junior year, start pre-candidate questionnaires and candidate kits as a freshman or sophomore.

Find out more about specific academy admission procedures:

[Air Force Academy Admissions](#) [Coast Guard Academy Admissions](#)

[Merchant Marine Academy Admissions](#) [Naval Academy Admissions](#)

[West Point Admissions](#)

RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORP (ROTC)

ROTC is a college program offered at more than 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States that prepares young adults to become officers in the U.S. Military. In exchange for a paid college education and a guaranteed post-college career, participants, or cadets, commit to serve in the military after graduation. Each service branch has its own take on ROTC.

PROS V. CONS OF JOINING ROTC

PROS OF JOINING ROTC	CONS OF JOINING ROTC
Significant scholarship amounts, covering tuition and housing are available	Serious commitment; you sign a legally-binding contract that could last up to 12 years
You'll enjoy a complete college experience alongside your ROTC training.	If you drop out or are expelled from the program, you will face serious consequences, including potential legal action.
ROTC is a prestigious program. You'll gain important qualities, including leadership, discipline, & maturity. You'll also stay active & healthy.	If you commit any violations of ROTC's standards or your college's, or drop below ROTC's academic requirements, you may be asked to leave the program and still face consequences and potential legal action.

<p>Many opportunities for postgraduate education & scholarships for ROTC graduates after fulfilling active duty.</p>	<p>While individual branch requirements vary, federal law requires that ROTC members must commit to a four-year active duty, usually directly after college and an additional 8-year military service. These requirements may be slightly lower for non-scholarship students.</p>
<p>Post-college service requirements are not in effect until you enroll in the ROTC Advanced Course, which is generally taken after the two- year Basic course.</p>	<p>You'll need to delay other career or education aspirations until your active service is complete.</p>

GAP YEAR

A Gap Year is a year-long break before a high school graduate begins college. It is an intentional, planned, and productive time. There are lots of preconceptions about a Gap Year. When done right, a Gap Year can be the best choice for students who really aren't quite ready to dive into college. If you are a junior or senior and are burned out/stressed out/greatly disliking anything academic, you might be a good Gap Year candidate. Remember these three rules:

1. A Gap Year is a well-planned, intentional year agreed upon by parents and students.
2. A Gap Year involves one or more of the following: Volunteering, Career Exploration/ Internship, Paid Work, and Travel.
3. At CCS, a Gap Year is planned during the senior year. Applications are also completed and submitted to colleges during senior year; admissions can usually be deferred until the following year.

The Gap Year Association is an excellent source for exploring what a Gap Year entails. The Link Year through Kanakuk Camps is also an excellent choice for students desiring to growth their faith and understand their spiritual gifts before going to college.

Almost 1/3 of college freshmen do not return to college for their sophomore year; only 59% of students who start college finish in six years. Maybe a Gap Year is just what you need to get you focused, rejuvenated, and ready for college.

College isn't for everyone. Look around at all your options. There's the military, as well as very good vocational tech schools in the area. Not everyone fits at colleges or should go to college right out of high school.

Caleb Philliber. CCS, Class of 2015

CCS & COLLEGE PREPARATION

CCS is intentional about preparing you for college. The best compliment is hearing from our graduates that college is easy. CCS graduates are well-prepared for any college they decide to attend whether that be a state school or a highly selective one such as Colorado School of Mines, Georgetown, Rice, University of Pennsylvania, Texas A & M, Rice, and Vassar (to name a few).

Here are some steps for your college-going success:

- #1. A great first step in getting ready for college is going to a great college prep school! You are already doing the first step.
- #2. Next, you are reading this book. All of the essential things I learn about the college admissions process goes into it. I update this book yearly
- #3. Third, you are given the use of SCOIR – the best college and career planning platform I have found.
- #4. You are invited to participate in a college essay brainstorming workshop (summer of senior year; additional fee)
- #5. You are invited to participate in Camp College (August of senior year; \$150 fee). Only CCS seniors may attend.
- #6. CCS is here to provide resources and support you along the way. Your job is to reach out for help when you need it.

COLLEGE ESSAY BRAINSTORMING WORKSHOP

I've learned that the college essay is what CCS students find the most challenging. It's this requirement that most often stalls the college application process. Every year seniors will exclaim, "I have nothing to write about," "There is nothing interesting about me," "I don't have an exciting story." This brainstorming workshop, using excellent curriculum from The College Essay Guy, helps students identify essential objects and important moments in their lives. Through brainstorming exercises, students are able to find focus for their college application essay.

CAMP COLLEGE

Camp College has become a tradition for seniors at CCS. Sessions are typically held the first full week of August. Camp College is an intense time of focus when you finalize your college application list, begin working on applications, update your resumé, work on your personal statement, and begin the scholarship searching process. The week culminates in a college fair, lunch, and Q & A Panel with a variety of knowledgeable college admissions counselors. It is the best way to kick off the senior year knowing exactly what needs to be accomplished and which deadlines don't need to be missed.

PARENTS & THE JOURNEY TO COLLEGE

“Partnering with parents” is an essential part of CCS’s mission statement. I want to partner with you and help you understand the process. Sometimes it’s difficult as parents, especially if this is your first high school-aged child, to know exactly how to help. Giving your child the opportunity to develop the skills he and she needs to leave home is a way we can partner together.

One of the biggest surprise’s parents get when their children go to college is how out of the loop they become. My husband and I have experienced it ourselves. Until a student turns 24, he must report his parents’ income to receive any type of financial aid, but in return, parents lose all right to grade access because of privacy rules. Just as we are training our children to be ready for college and life, we are training ourselves to let them go.

The most helpful article I’ve found as an academic counselor and as a mom is one written by Emily Genser, a veteran English teacher in Connecticut. In summary, these are the suggestions she provides:

FRESHMAN YEAR: Trust your child’s teachers. Every teacher wants your child to succeed and most will do whatever it takes to help them do just that. Consider emailing each teacher at the beginning of the year. Don’t send a lengthy email but introduce yourself and your child. Include any major concerns to look out for and provide any and all phone numbers. If you welcome teachers to call whenever they have a concern, the teacher will be more likely to reach out. If you see a trend in dropping grades across subjects, get in touch with teachers. Teachers don’t know how students are doing in other subjects, so what you see as an issue, teachers may not catch.

Do not do your child's homework. It may come from a place of goodness in you, but it doesn't set your child up for success. Check out Judith Newman's column in the [New York Times](#) about helping with homework.

SOPHOMORE YEAR: Year one is through and with each new year, teachers raise the bar for your child and lower it for you. It is now time for your child to learn to advocate for himself. Go to Open House (CCS calls it Knight School). Meet the teachers. Feel free to email teachers for information and also offer some notes about your son or daughter. Stand back and let him learn to plan his work and to balance the load. This is the year to screw up and work it out. This is the year to let him grow into himself. Only step in when there is no other choice.

JUNIOR YEAR: *Ahhhhh!* This is the year. Whether or not he shows it, your child will be feeling frantic this year. Teenagers have an amazing ability to hide their anxiety. Let home be a refuge for him. Try not to apply more pressure. Help your child figure out to whom he can go for a strong, personal recommendation.

SENIOR YEAR: Home stretch. Once applications are in, the whole family can breathe more easily. Make sure your child is meeting application and scholarship deadlines. Check on grades periodically but start him more like an adult. He'll need to feel responsible for himself if he is leaving the house in a year. You'll both be better for it.

ASSESSING YOUR CHILD'S COLLEGE READINESS

Psychologist Lisa Damour suggests that parents do not confuse college admission with college readiness. From her years working with teens, she says that when college students wind up in her office after a terrible first semester, "They spent their senior year of high school and usually several years before that hinting, if not skywriting, that they weren't ready to go to college." Here are nine questions she suggests help you assess the college readiness of your teen.

1. Who is applying to college?

If you are driving the entire process, then your child may not be ready to be successful in college.

2. Can your teen cope with the "hard" feelings in life?

We all have setbacks and must learn to manage them. Students who struggle to deal independently and effectively with setbacks may feel overwhelmed in a college environment.

3. Can your teen take full responsibility for self-care?

From sleeping to eating to exercise to self-control, your teen needs to be able to manage the practical aspects of life.

4. Can your teen manage his or her time?

Once teens enter college, with more free time in their day than ever, scheduling their time becomes a new, and for some, unmanageable responsibility.

5. Does your teen know when and how to seek help?

Dr. Julia Routbort, associate dean of student affairs for health and wellness at Skidmore College, emphasizes that students need to have learned in high school how to bounce back from failures and do not fall apart when they have setbacks. A college student needs to be able to identify when they are in some sort of trouble (academic, emotional, or other), decide on the severity of their problems, and reach out for help.

6. Can your teen take responsibility for and learn from their poor decisions?

All teens make mistakes. They are ready for college if they are able to own up to the mistakes, take responsibility, and change future behavior.

7. Has your teen shown that they can manage themselves in a setting without their family?

Being able to manage themselves at camp, away on a trip, or in a workplace, signals they are ready for college.

8. Can your teen assess risk?

College is a time of increased risky behavior. Successful college students are able to ask themselves “What could go wrong if I do this?” instead of “What are the chances I could get caught!”

9. College is a (expensive) gift like none other. Will your teen take advantage of what it has to offer? Is it truly their decision to go?

If college is simply the expectation and at no point was there ever a question about their attending, the result could be poor.

PARENTS & SENIOR YEAR

THINGS PARENTS SHOULD DO	THINGS PARENTS SHOULD NOT DO
Be honest with your child about restrictions & needs. If there is only so much money available, if there are geographic restrictions, if there is anything that may restrict colleges choices, communicate them to your child.	Don't take over the process. Use the checklist provided to make sure tasks are being accomplished and deadlines are being met by your child.
Keep an open mind. Colleges have drastically changed since we went to school. Realize there are great schools you may have never heard of.	Don't think of college acceptance as a competition. The best college for your child may not be the most competitive to get into.
Help the academic counselor and teachers understand your child by providing a written description of her/him before the senior year begins.	Don't request a meeting with the counselor to go over the college application process without wanting to include your child in the meeting.
Attend college visits with your child. Students wants to make it a social time with their peers, but it should really be family time.	Don't contact colleges on your child's behalf. Your child should be making contact himself.
Proof your child's college applications before they are sent. Make sure information is correct.	Don't make your child feel incapable by completing applications for him/her.
Read over your child's college essays. See if they communicate who he is, how well he thinks, and how well he writes.	You should not be writing your child's essays. College admissions can spot a parent-written essay in a second.
Complete the FAFSA on October 1 & the CSS Financial Profile (some selective colleges require the CSS Profile).	Don't let your child miss deadlines, especially financial aid deadlines.
You have chosen a great school to prepare your child for college. Trust that God has an excellent plan for your child.	Don't get involved in the college competition frenzy. College goals are easily achieved without piling on unnecessary stress.

PRIVATE COLLEGE COUNSELORS

I've had parents ask, "Should I hire a private college counselor to help my child?"

My answer is, "Well, you can. It won't hurt my feelings."

Please understand that a private college counselor doesn't have special college admission power.

Especially in today's climate where college admission scandals have recently been front-page news, the importance of allowing the student to own the process is more important than ever.

Because my role at CCS is broader than just college counseling, I am unable to sit with each student and walk them individually through the process.

However, I provide all of the information essential to helping your child make a plan from his freshman year through the college application process during the senior year.

When a college admission's office has a question about an applicant, they do not call the private college counselor; they only call the high school academic counselor. The private college counselor does not write the letter of recommendation for students; the high school academic counselor writes this letter.

If I am not given the opportunity to know your child, how can I be his or her advocate?

Being able to work with your child throughout high school on the "small" things (course selection, study skills help, test prep suggestions, etc.) allows me the privilege of developing a relationship with your child.

GLOSSARY OF EVERYTHING COLLEGE

ACCEPTANCE RATE—The percentage of applicants a college accepts for admission.

ACCREDITATION—Certification that a college meets the standards of a state, regional or national association.

ACT ASSESSMENT®—a standardized college entrance exam through American College Testing; www.actstudent.org; (319) 337-1270 for registration inquiries; it is designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The test covers four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. There is also an optional writing portion of the test. It is curriculum based and tests what you know and are able to do based on what you have been studying in the classroom. As of September 2020, the ACT will allow students to

ACT® RESIDUAL TESTING-- An on-campus or "residual" testing program is available to ACT-participating colleges to administer the ACT to students who were unable to test on a national test date. ACT Residual Testing is strictly limited only to students who have enrolled, have been

admitted, or have officially applied to your institution. Scores from Residual Testing are reported only to the institution where tested for admission, course placement, and advising purposes.

ADMISSION/APPLICATIONS/ACCEPTANCE—You must apply to get into college. The process colleges use to decide who gets in is called admission. Colleges review each application and decide which students to accept. Students receive a letter of acceptance or rejection telling them whether they have been admitted.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT® (AP)—AP courses offer college-level coursework in high schools. To earn college credit, students take an end-of-the-year exam which covers all of the course materials. High scores should earn advanced standing in colleges, with or without college credit.

ARTS AND SCIENCES (LIBERAL ARTS)—This is the college within a university, or a separate college course of study, that includes the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, foreign languages, and fine arts. It's America's typical undergraduate college.

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE—To earn an associate's degree, you must complete a program that is at least two, but less than four, years of college usually at a community or technical college. These degrees are often designed to transfer to a four-year college.

AUTOMATIC ADMISSIONS - a practice that guarantees college acceptance to students who meet certain requirements regarding grades, class rank, and test scores.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE—The undergraduate degree offered by four-year colleges and universities.

BLOCK SYSTEM—The academic year is divided into nine three-and-one-half-week blocks. A student takes only one course at a time, total immersion, which gives no excuses for “I have to do the other subject first.” It also permits the courses to be held off campus. Colorado College has made the block system famous.

CANDIDATE'S REPLY DATE AGREEMENT (CRDA)—Also known as National Decision Day; The May 1st deadline allows students to have until May 1st to accept any college's offer of admission. Observed by the selective colleges by which the applicant must respond to one offer of admission, usually with a deposit.

COALITION APPLICATION—The latest of three online college applications accepted by about 70 colleges.

CCS WAY—A high standard of behavior reflective of being a CCS Knight

CLASSIC LEARNING TEST (CLT) – the newest standardized test, the CLT, is now being accepted at colleges (primarily Christian universities). It can be taken at-home, remotely, and tests English, math, and critical reasoning skills.

CLEP® (COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM) TESTING— Students who have received excellent scores on placement exams, SAT, SAT Subject Test or ACT and graduated with honors, can test their knowledge and advance out of introductory courses by taking a CLEP exam at the college he or she will be attending. Students who test well in certain subject areas should also check with colleges about these programs. CLEP is a national program and your scores may be used at institutions around the country.

COLLEGE BOARD—Administers the PSAT, the SAT, the SAT Subjects Tests, the Advanced Placement (AP) tests, the College Scholarship Service (CSS), and PROFILE.

COLLEGE—An institution of higher education that awards degrees and certificates.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD (CEEB) CODE—When registering for the ACT and SAT, use the CCS CEEB Code: 372717.

COMMON APPLICATION—One of three online multiple college application forms accepted by about 800 colleges. The Common App is often supplemented by the college's own form. It is available online at www.commonapp.org.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE—Two-year institutions of higher education; courses and credits can generally transfer to a four-year college. These colleges also offer work-related and technical programs to prepare students for the world of work.

COMPETITIVE COLLEGE—A college with a rigorous, highly selective admissions process. Competitive colleges typically admit fewer than 25 percent of applicants.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS—Final tests given to college seniors in some selective liberal arts colleges, usually in their major; often required to graduate

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT—Also known as Dual Credit; classes where students are enrolled in two schools (typically a high school as well as college) and earning college credit while in high school.

CONSORTIUM—A group of colleges and universities that offer joint programs, cross-registration for academic course work, and coordinated social, cultural, and athletic programs to the students within the affiliated group. For example: Amherst, Hampshire, the University of Massachusetts, Mount Holyoke, and Smith are the Five College Consortium.

CORE CURRICULUM— A specified program of required courses that all students must take in order to graduate. At CCS, core courses include math, science, English, and social studies. Bible is also a core course at CCS.

COST OF ATTENDANCE—The total cost for one year of college. It includes tuition, fees, books, food, housing, and transportation.

CSS (College Scholarship Service) Profile – A financial aid form from the College Board that is required by many of the selective private colleges and universities for students seeking financial aid in addition to the national FAFSA.

DEFERRED ADMISSION—Candidate not accepted during Early Action or Early Decision; admission may be reconsidered along with the Regular Decision applicants. Also, a postponement for some students from the waitlist to defer until the next January, February, or even for a year. Some students request a deferral after being admitted in order to take a Gap Year program.

DEGREES—Degrees are what you earn when you complete a program of study. The most commonly earned degrees are associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees.

DEMONSTRATED NEED—The difference between the family contribution as established on the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the total cost of attending college.

DOCTORAL DEGREES—The highest degree offered by colleges and universities; this degree can take four or more years after a bachelor's degree to complete.

DUAL CREDIT—Also known as Concurrent Enrollment; colleges and universities partner with high schools to provide students the opportunity to earn college credits while simultaneously completing their high school degrees; CCS partners with Colorado Christian University providing students with dual credit opportunities. Upper School students who have taken college preparatory courses and the ACT may be eligible to take college courses while still in high school.

EARLY ACTION (EA)— A program whereby the admission committee will review a student's application earlier than those applying under the regular decision deadline; students receive an

early admission, deferral, or denial decision in December; students are not obligated to enroll if admitted.

EARLY DECISION (ED)—This plan involves a binding commitment between the student and the college. Think, *“I pick you, if you pick me!”* The admission committee will review the student’s application earlier than those of students applying regular decision, and the committee will inform the student of its decision usually in December. In turn, the student, if accepted, is committed to attending the college and canceling (or not submitting) applications to any other colleges. College’s act on Early Decision application in one of three ways: accept, defer, or deny. If an Early Decision student is deferred, he/she is no longer ethically committed to the particular institution.

EDUCATION TESTING SERVICE (ETS)—ETS, located in Princeton, NJ, handles all the registration and score reports for the College Board Tests (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, PSAT, and AP Exams); (609) 921-9000

ELECTIVES—Classes you choose to add to your school schedule; they are generally not required but some are considered compulsory electives (*ones that have to be taken at some point*).

EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC)—The amount you and your family are expected to contribute toward college costs. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) determines your EFC.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES -- non-classroom or after-school activities, including sports, clubs, student government, community service, religious groups, and social organizations or events.

FAFSA: See Free Application for Federal Student Aid

FEDERAL METHODOLOGY (FM)—The method of calculating the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that is determined only on the FAFSA and the federal aid formula.

FEES—College costs not included in tuition; fees may be charged to cover the cost of materials and equipment needed in certain courses. Fees may also be charged for student events, programs, and publications, like a yearbook.

FEE WAIVER—Exemptions for needy students to apply for college admission without having to pay the application fee.

FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE—Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, loans, and part-time employment from federal, state, institutional and private sources. These types of aid are combined

to create an “award package.” The types and amounts of aid you receive are determined by financial need, available funds, student classification, academic performance, and sometimes the timeliness of your application.

FINANCIAL NEED—The difference between what your family is expected to contribute and the total cost of attendance for one year of college. *Financial needs equals Cost of Attendance minus Expected Family Contribution.*

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES—These schools offer certificates, bachelor’s (sometimes called four-year degrees), master’s, professional, and doctoral degrees in broad subject areas like business administration, history, or biology.

FOUR-ONE-FOUR—An academic calendar consisting of two regular four-month semesters with a short winter or January term in between. For example, MIT, Eckerd, Williams, and Middlebury use the four- one-four calendar.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)— form used to apply for need-based financial aid from Federal Student financial aid programs offered by the U.S. Department of Education. The FAFSA form is available online at www.fafsa.gov on October 1st of a student’s senior year and each October 1st while in college.

GAPPING—The practice of offering less financial aid than the student’s calculated need.

GAP YEAR—Usually a year off from school between high school graduation and the first year of college. Check out the American Gap Association www.gapyearassociation.org to learn how, why, where, and when.

GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT TEST (GED)-- a series of tests that will indicate whether or not a student has a high school level of education. This is known as the GED test.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)/LETTER GRADES—Most colleges consider letter grades and GPAs in admissions.

GRADUATE STUDENT—A college student who has completed the bachelor’s degree and is working toward a master’s or doctoral degree.

GRANTS—Money for college that does not have to be repaid. Most grants are need-based and are awarded by the state or federal government.

GREEK SYSTEM--Fraternities and sororities on campus. They are called “Greek” because their names originate from letters in the Greek alphabet.

HIGHER EDUCATION—Any program of study or degree program for high school graduates or people with General Education Development (GED) certificates.

HOLISTIC APPLICATION REVIEW—takes into account factors such as a student’s strength of high school coursework, academic and extracurricular interests, unique talents, and personality (through college essays and/or interviews); admission decisions are not based solely on empirical data such as GPA and standardized test scores.

HUMANITIES—Courses in which the primary focus is on human culture; this includes philosophy, foreign language, religion, and literature.

INSTITUTIONAL METHODOLOGY—A method of calculating Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that includes the FAFSA and the college’s own financial aid form and takes into consideration the institution’s priorities.

INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJOR—Combined majors such as political science, philosophy, and economics, or Spanish and business administration, often created and negotiate by students.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT—A foreign language graduation requirement is mandatory at many colleges. Most AP students are exempt from this requirement if their scores meet the standard of the college. Many others can place out of the requirements through examinations at the college or university they will be attending.

LEGACY—An applicant whose parents or grandparents are graduates of a particular college. Siblings, uncles, and aunts are not usually considered legacy. Most colleges give academically qualified legacies an edge in admission.

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE—The college within a university or a separate college course of study that includes the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, foreign language, and fine arts. It’s America’s typical undergraduate college.

LOANS—Money given to a student that must be paid back. There are several types of loans, including low to zero interest student loans given out by the federal government, like the Perkins and Stafford loans. These are the best options, since you don’t have to pay back the money until you graduate.

Private loans, offered through banks and credit unions, typically have higher interest rates. MASTER'S DEGREES—This is a graduate degree added onto a bachelor's degree. It usually takes two years to complete.

MERIT-BASED FINANCIAL AID—Financial aid based on high academic, athletic, artistic, or community service achievement. Merit scholarships are not awarded based on financial need.

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM—A scholarship program that begins with the scores on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) taken in October of the junior year. Separate programs award black and Hispanic students from the same PSAT exam.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA)—serves as the athletics governing body for more than 1,300 colleges, universities, conferences, and organizations. The NCAA member college and universities develop the rules and guidelines for athletics eligibility and athletics competition for each of the three NCAA divisions.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA) ELIGIBILITY CENTER—it certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes who wish to compete in NCAA Division I or II athletics. The website is www.eligibilitycenter.org. The phone number is 877/262-1492. The online registration should be completed at the beginning of the sophomore (10th) year. The NCAA Code is 9999. This code should be used when taking the ACT or SAT and want scores reported to the NCAA.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS (NAIA)-- Headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., the NAIA is the governing body of small athletics programs that are dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS (NAIA) ELIGIBILITY CENTER-- PlayNAIA.org helps future student-athletes discover and connect with NAIA schools, coaches and athletic scholarships. PlayNAIA is also the official clearinghouse for NAIA eligibility. Every student-athlete must register with the NAIA Eligibility Center to play sports at an NAIA college or university.

NATIONAL DECISION DAY--Also known as National Decision Day; The May 1st deadline allows students to have until May 1st to accept any college's offer of admission. Observed by the selective colleges by which the applicant must respond to one offer of admission, usually with a deposit.

NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID—Financial aid given to students with a demonstrated financial need.

NEED-BLIND ADMISSIONS—A policy in which the applicant’s ability to pay for college does not affect the admissions decision. Fewer and fewer colleges have a need-blind admissions policy.

OPEN ADMISSIONS POLICY—Open admissions institutions are usually public two-year community and technical colleges. The term “open admission” refers to an admission policy that says almost anyone with a high school diploma or GED can be admitted to that college.

PASS-FAIL—An option to replace grades at some colleges to encourage students to take courses outside their major interests and talents, and an option at some colleges for first semester of freshman year.

PERSONAL STATEMENT—Sometimes referred to as a college application essay. Personal statements are essays that give admissions officers’ insight into your character, personality and motivation. Seems obvious to state, but students should write their own personal statements.

PRELIMINARY SAT (PSAT)—A qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program from the College Board, administered in October of junior year. CCS registers and administers all 9th–11th students to take the PSAT in October.

PRE-ACT-- The PreACT has the same four multiple-choice sections as the regular ACT: English, Math, Reading, and Science. There is no Writing section. The test is also scored the same way as the regular ACT, on a scale from 1-36. The main difference is that it’s considerably shorter. While the regular ACT is 2 hours and 55 minutes long (3 hours 35 minutes, if you add the Writing section), the PreACT is only 1 hour and 55 minutes long. All CCS 9th graders are registered and administered the Pre-ACT.

PREFERENTIAL PACKAGING—A policy of awarding financial aid in which colleges offer the best aid to their most desired applicants

PRIMARY SOURCE SCHOLARSHIP—Scholarship money that comes from the college or university where you apply

PROFILE—A financial aid form from the College Board that is required by many of the selective private colleges and universities for students seeking financial aid.

PSAT—See Preliminary SAT.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE COLLEGES—Public colleges are run by the state or other government agency and are managed by public boards. Governments do not run private colleges.

QUAD—An abbreviation of “quadrangle” found on many traditional campuses, where the classroom or dorm complexes are built on a square or rectangle with a green in the center.

QUARTER SYSTEM—An academic calendar of four quarters, of which three constitute a full academic year; sometimes called the Dartmouth Plan, where students must attend one summer in the four years. This system encourages students to be more creative in their off-campus time, which can come any time of the year, not only in the summer. Lots of California colleges and universities seem to adopt this model as well as University of Chicago, University of Denver, & Drexel.

REACH SCHOOL— A reach school is a college that is unlikely to offer you admission. A particular college qualifies as a reach school for you if your high school GPA and standardized test scores are significantly below those of the college’s average student.

REGULAR ADMISSION—Most colleges have a particular deadline for the receipt of applications which may be from January 1st on. However, the CCS Way is to have all applications started by October 1st. Students should respond to an acceptance notification no later than May 1st.

RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC)—This program can help college students pay for their education. In return for scholarship money, students agree to serve in the military.

RESIDENT ADVISOR (RA)—A paid student personnel officer or an upper-classmen living in a freshman dorm to offer support and advice to new students.

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES—A living unit within a larger institution that offers special academic programs to its students; best models at Rice and Yale. In public universities, a residential college is also called a living/learning community.

RESTRICTED EARLY ACTION (REA)-- Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Stanford are best known for “single- choice” or “restricted” Early Action. If you apply Early Action, you are declaring to the university that you have submitted all of your forms by the required “Early” deadline and that you are **ONLY** applying to one school, **THEIR SCHOOL**, through any kind of early program

RETENTION RATE—The percentage of students who return to a college for their sophomore year; an indicator of student satisfaction.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS (EARLY NOTIFICATION)—Applications are considered as soon as all required materials (application form, fees, transcript recommendations, test scores) are received by the college. Students are notified as the decisions are made, usually four to six weeks after completion of the application.

SAFETY SCHOOL—A college where, based on the average GPA and test scores of accepted students, you have a high likelihood of being admitted.

SAR--See Student Aid Report.

SAT—Three-and-a-half-hour standardized college entrance exam through the College Board measuring critical reading and math logic; colleges will take the ACT or SAT for admission

SAT SUBJECT TESTS— One-hour standardized tests measuring achievement in a particular course of study; the subject tests are not as prevalent as they've been in the past. Here is a complete list of colleges that use the SAT Subject Tests for admissions decisions.

SCHOLARSHIP—Money for college that does not have to be paid back. Usually awarded based on specific criteria, such as your academic performance, extracurricular activities, ethnic heritage or religious affiliation. Scholarships may be awarded by colleges, private groups or states.

SCORE CHOICE—An option (since March '09) whereby students can choose which SAT and SAT Subjects Test scores they want to send to the colleges.

SECONDARY SOURCE SCHOLARSHIP—scholarship money that comes from private foundations and organizations

SEMESTER SYSTEM—Two blocks of several months each, constituting a full academic year at most American colleges. Students take summers off. CCS works on a semester system.

SOCIAL SCIENCES—College courses that deal with human society, including anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.

STUDENT AID REPORT (SAR)—The form sent to families after filing their FAFSA form that tells the student the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

STUDENT-FACULTY RATIO—The number of students at a college compared to the number of faculty. Some colleges see this as an indicator of class size and professor accessibility, but a lower ratio doesn't guarantee either. For a true indication of class size and professor accessibility, speak with students and professors at a college.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL—Items you include with your college application to provide more information about your talents, experiences and goals. Materials could include work samples, additional essays, newspaper clippings, music CDs or art slides. Verify if a college welcomes (or requests) these materials before sending.

TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA)—A graduate assistant who teaches undergraduates, and/or holds smaller discussion sections or study groups in conjunction with a professor's lectures.

TEST OPTIONAL COLLEGES – Colleges that do not use ACT/SAT scores for admission decisions. See fairtest.org for a list of these colleges.

THREE-TWO PROGRAM (3-2)—A program in which a student studies three years in a liberal arts college followed by two years at a specialized school. Examples are engineering, nursing, or business administration.

TRANSCRIPT—a permanent record of all the classes you take and grades you earn while in high school or college; an official transcript is a signed document sent directly from one institution to another.

TRANSFER OF CREDITS—some students attend more than one college during their college careers. When they move or transfer from one college to another, they can transfer certain credit hours or classes from the old college to the new one. The new college determines which courses will count toward its graduation requirements.

TRIMESTERS—The academic calendar divided into three equal terms to constitute a full year.

TUITION—the amount colleges charge for each hour of class time. Tuition does not include the cost of books, fees, room, or board (food). Tuition charges vary greatly from college to college.

UNDERGRADUATE—a college student working toward a bachelor's degree; usually a four-year program

UNIVERSAL APPLICATION—One of the three multiple online apps, it represents around 50 colleges (including Harvard, Cornell, & Princeton).

UNIVERSITY—a university offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees; typically, a college only offers an undergraduate degree. Not all schools of higher education that *could* call themselves a university choose to do so, even though “university” tends to have more positive

connotations. For some of these schools, they stick with the “college” designation simply because of tradition (for example, Harvard College.)

WAIT LIST—The college admission committee has favorably considered your application, but the committee is over-subscribed. Your application will be considered, likely in late spring or early summer, depending on space available.

WORK STUDY—A federally funded program whereby students are given campus jobs as part of their financial aid package; Students must complete the FAFSA form in order to get a work-study position.

YIELD—The percentage of accepted students who go on to enroll at a college. Competitive colleges have high yield rates. Some say that admissions are driven by yield, because colleges are often rated by how many students enroll from the accepted list

YEAR-TO-YEAR TO DO LIST

EIGHTH (8TH) - THINK: EXPLORATION!

ALL YEAR	Do your best in classes. The study habits you develop now will go with you to high school.
ALL YEAR	Does your family qualify for OK Promise? Check out www.okpromise.org
ALL YEAR	Be involved in school! Try out things you are interested in doing and find out what you like.
JANUARY	Read the Academic Course Catalog (available online in Jan.) and begin planning your high school courses.
JANUARY- MARCH	Select the best courses for you for your freshman year. Course selection sheets are due the first Monday in March.
SPRING	Take your standardized tests seriously.
MAY	Beginning May 1, keep track of the service hours you do. You will learn how to log your hours through the app X2VOL the beginning of your freshman year.
JUNE-AUGUST	Make your summer count! It’s not what you do in the summer; it’s what you learn from what you do.

FRESHMAN YEAR (9th) - THINK: GET SERIOUS!

ALL YEAR	Make the best grades you can. The grades you make in your classes will be transcribed on your transcript and creates your GPA. You have six semesters until you apply to college.
ALL YEAR	Get involved in activities you enjoy and will stick with for four years. Colleges like to see you commit to something, display growth, leadership, and dedication.
ALL YEAR	Pay attention to deadlines. Whether it's a t-shirt deadline, a teen board deadline, or your assignments, it's time to find a way to manage deadlines.
ALL YEAR	Does your family qualify for OK Promise? Check out www.okpromise.org .
FALL & SPRING	Use a resumé template (several will be provided in SCOIR), keep track of your activities, awards, honors, paid work, and volunteer work NOW. Don't wait until your senior year to start developing your resumé.
AUGUST	Attend Camp College Q &A Panel & College Fair.
SEPTEMBER	Pay attention to X2VOL service hour training offered during your Bible class. The service year begins May 1-April 30. A minimum of 25 hours per year should be logged no later than April 30th.
OCTOBER & JANUARY	Do your best on standardized testing. CCS will register and pay for you to take the PSAT in Oct. & Pre-ACT in Jan.
DECEMBER	When your PSAT scores arrive in Dec., create your College Board Student account (www.collegeboard.org). Connect your account/scores to free customized PSAT & SAT Prep with Khan Academy.
JANUARY	Read the Academic Course Catalog (available online in Jan.) and begin planning your sophomore courses. Pay attention at the Course Planning meeting in Jan. Talk to your current teachers to help you make the best course selections for you.
MARCH	Turn in course selection sheet no later than the first Monday in March.
SPRING	Take a college visit! You get one documented college visit as a freshman. When you receive your PRE-ACT scores, create your ACT Student account (www.actstudent.org). Write down your log-in info. Connect your account to ACT Academy for free, customized ACT prep.
APRIL	All service hours must be logged by April 30th. Remember to log your hours (minimum of 25) in X2VOL as you serve.
SUMMER	Make your summer count! Find experiences that are interesting and rewarding. Maybe it's getting a paid job or a meaningful volunteer experience; maybe it's applying for a teen board or taking an additional class. It's not what you do in summer; it's what you learn from what you do.

SOPHOMORE YEAR (10th) - THINK: NO SOPHOMORE SLUMP!

ALL YEAR	This is the LAST year you will be able to qualify for OK Promise. The deadline is in June. Check out www.okpromise.org
ALL YEAR	Continue your involvement in activities you enjoy. Colleges want you to be authentically and specifically you. Do what you love to do.
ALL YEAR	Pay attention to deadlines. Whether it's a t-shirt deadline, a teen board deadline, or your assignments, it's time to find a way to manage deadlines.
ALL YEAR	Plan to register and take the ACT and/or SAT once this year at a national testing site. You should already have your log-in information and password recorded for your ACT or SAT account. Don't worry about taking a prep course yet.
ALL YEAR	By researching colleges, start creating a list of colleges that you are interested in applying in SCOIR.
FALL & SPRING	Do the very best in your classes you can in order to have a strong GPA. There are only six semesters before you apply to college; this year is 3 & 4.
FALL & SPRING	Keep track of your weighted and unweighted GPA. It will be added to your SCOIR account in January and June each year.
FALL & SPRING	Take a college visit! You get two documented college visits as a sophomore.
FALL & SPRING	Introduce yourself to college reps visiting CCS. Demonstrate interest by filling out cards and getting on college mailing lists.
FALL & SPRING	Continue adding to the resumé you began as a freshman.
FALL	If you want to pursue an athletic scholarship with an NCAA or NAIA college, complete registration at the beginning of sophomore year. NCAA (www.eligibilitycenter.org) and NAIA (http://www.playnaia.org)
LATE FALL/EARLY SPRING	If you are interested in applying for teen boards, make sure you know when applications are released and the deadlines for the applications. Many are due in December.
AUGUST	Attend the Camp College Q & A Panel & College Fair.
OCTOBER	You will take the PSAT in October. CCS will register and pay for you to take it.
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	If you are taking AP and/or Dual Credit course/s, be sure you pay attention to AP testing registration deadlines and dual credit registration deadlines.

JANUARY	In January, read the Upper School Academic Course catalog (available in January) and determine the best courses to take next year. Talk to your current teachers and decide on the best classes with you.
MARCH	Turn in course selections no later than first Monday in March .
APRIL	All service hours must be logged by April 30th in X2VOL. The new service year begins May 1.
MAY	If you are taking an AP class and registered to take the exam, the test/s will take place on a designated date in May.
JUNE	If you family qualifies for the OK Promise Scholarship (www.okpromise.org), this is the last year to enroll in the program. The deadline is typically mid-June.
SUMMER	Make your summer count. Remember: It's not what you do in the summer that counts; it's what you learn from what you do. Find experiences that are interesting and rewarding.

JUNIOR YEAR (11th) - THINK: BE INTENTIONAL

ALL YEAR	Understand you will applying to college with the GPA you have earned at the end of this school year. Do your very best in your classes.
ALL YEAR	Continue being active in activities you enjoy. Colleges want you to be authentically you.
ALL YEAR	Continue adding to the list of colleges you are interested attending in SCOIR. You could possibly have 10-15 colleges on this list by now.
ALL YEAR	Pay attention to deadlines. Whether it's a t-shirt deadline, a teen board deadline, or your assignments, it's time to find a way to manage deadlines.
ALL YEAR	Take an ACT or SAT prep course this year before a national test date. Research indicates a student's score plateaus after taking the ACT or SAT three times after a prep course. The main office has a list of test prep resources.
ALL YEAR	Keep track of your weighted and unweighted GPA. It will be added to your SCOIR account in January and June each year.
FALL & SPRING	Continue to add to the resumé you began as a freshman. When you are a senior, you are going to be so glad you have kept your resumé up-to-date.
FALL & SPRING	Speak with every college rep who visits our school. They not only know a lot about their college but also college and financial aid, in general.

THE CCS WAY, 2021

FALL & SPRING	Start demonstrating interest in all colleges you would consider attending. Get on mailing lists, respond to emails from admission counselors, visit campuses – these are ways to demonstrate interest.
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	If you are taking AP and/or Dual Credit course/s, be sure you pay attention to AP testing registration deadlines and dual credit registration deadlines.
AUGUST	Attend the Camp College Q & A Panel & College Fair.
FALL	Understand the process if pursuing acceptance to a military academy or participate in a ROTC program. The process begins as a junior.
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	You will take the PSAT in October. CCS will register and pay for you to take the PSAT. This is the qualifying year (junior year only) for National Merit Scholarships.
LATE FALL/EARLY SPRING	If you are interested in applying for teen boards, make sure you know when applications open and the deadlines to return them. Many open in Dec. and are due soon after.
SPRING	Students are most ready to take the ACT & SAT in the spring of junior year and summer/fall of senior year. If for some reason you haven't taken the ACT or SAT yet, be sure you do so now.
JANUARY	Read the Upper School Academic Course Catalog (released in Jan.) and determine the best courses to take next year. Get recommendations from your current teachers.
MARCH	Turn in course selection sheets no later than first Monday in March. Commit to your choices.
APRIL	Log your service hours (25 hours minimum) in X2VOL by April 30th. The new service year begins May 1.
MAY	If you are taking an AP class and have registered for the exam/s, the test/s will take place on designated dates in May.
MAY	Register for College Essay Workshops (July) & Camp College (August).
SUMMER	Memorize your social security number; set professional voice mail on cell phone; perform a social media clean-up.
SUMMER	Make this summer count! Get organized and ready to tackle your senior year.

SENIOR YEAR (12th) - THINK: DEADLINES, DEADLINES, DEADLINES!

ALL YEAR	Look above. Deadlines are so important. Please pay attention to all deadlines.
ALL YEAR	Follow Mrs. Shields 'CCS Senior Firsts' & 'CCS Senior Must-Know' Lists.
ALL YEAR	Look for scholarships! This book has dozens of sites to search.
SUMMER, FALL, SPRING	Visit colleges! This is the best way to find your best fit college. You get four documented college visits as a senior.
SUMMER, FALL, SPRING	If you are still seeking a higher ACT or SAT score, register to take it. Colleges will take scores for admission as well as scholarship awards well into spring of your senior year.
JULY	Participate in Mrs. Shields' College Essay Workshop. Registration required.
AUGUST	Attend Camp College.
SEPTEMBER	At the beginning of the school year, get your FAFSA ID. Visit FSAID.ed.gov and create a username and password.
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	If you are taking AP and/or Dual Credit course/s, pay attention to registration deadlines.
OCTOBER 1	Have your college list complete no later than October 1. Mrs. Shields' recommends having 7 'First Choice' colleges on your list in SCOIR.
OCTOBER 1	Complete FAFSA (www.fafsa.gov) on Oct. 1 or soon after.
OCTOBER 1	Does your college require the additional CSS Profile? Selective colleges may have you complete this in addition to the FAFSA.
NOVEMBER 1	Many colleges have Early Action/Early Decision deadlines on Nov.1. Don't miss deadlines.
APRIL	Log your service hours (minimum of 25) in X2VOL no later than April 30th.
MAY 1	National College Decision Day
MAY	Graduation is soon
JUNE	If you have taken Dual Credit courses, you must request your transcript be sent to the college you will be attending through the dual credit college (currently Colorado Christian U). Be sure and indicate HOLD FOR GRADES to ensure your spring dual credit courses are added to your college transcript.

JUNE 1	CCS will send your final high school transcript to the college you will be attending.
SUMMER	Read <u>Thriving at College</u> by Alex Chediak. Seriously, this is an excellent and practical book to help you succeed in college.
AUGUST	You are off! Go make us proud!

FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE - THINK: I'M READY FOR THIS!

ALL YEAR	Treat college like your job. Get up and go to work. When you're not in class, use the time to study. If you treat your day this way, you'll have plenty of time for socializing.
ALL YEAR	Own your Christian faith. Make it THE priority. Find a church to attend. Join a Christian organization on campus. Your faith will be challenged; do things to strengthen it.
ALL YEAR	Call your favorite cheerleader when you need a pep talk. Everyone gets discouraged; know when you need to reach out to others for help.
ALL YEAR	Use the resources available on your campus. Every campus has writing and math labs with peer tutors. These are typically free and waiting for you to take advantage of them.
FALL & SPRING	Reach the syllabus for each class. This is the map of the class. Don't expect your professors to remind you about deadlines.
FALL & SPRING	Get to know your professors and visit them during their office hours. This is WHY they have office hours. Before an exam, write down material you have questions on and take your list to your professor's office hours.
AUGUST	Find three spots on campus to call yours: (1) your room for light studying, socializing, and sleep, (2) a place to study and give you uninterrupted time; (3) a place to let your mind wander and be quiet.
FALL	When planning your spring and summer schedule, ask your advisor about Study Abroad. Don't miss the opportunity to study in another country during college.
OCTOBER 1	It's time to do the FAFSA again. You will complete the FAFSA every year in college.

MRS. SHIELDS' LIST OF LINKS

MY FAVORITE COLLEGE RESOURCES

[List of College Admission Podcasts](#) Great resource to see all of the college admission podcasts available

[Blog: Prep Scholar](#) My go-to blog for answers to college admission information

[College Confidential - World's Largest College Forum](#)

[College Essay Guy](#) Really, really great, step-by-step information on the college admission process; lots of free resources like resumé templates

COLLEGES

[Colleges with Guaranteed Admission Based on SAT and ACT Scores](#)

[Colleges Requiring ALL ACT Scores To Be Sent](#)

[Colleges That Super Score ACT](#)

[Colleges That Allow Applicants to Self-Report ACT & SAT Scores](#) – This means you don't have to pay to send your scores until you have been accepted to the college.

[Colleges With Lowest Acceptance Rates](#)

[Most Selective Colleges in US](#)

[The Easiest Colleges To Get Into](#)

[Biggest Colleges in US](#)

[Smallest Colleges in US](#)

[70 Most Conservative Colleges in US](#)

[20 Best Public Universities](#)

[11 Best Pre-Law Universities](#)

[12 Best Accounting Schools in US](#)

[11 Best Business Colleges in US](#)

[17 Best Fine Arts Colleges in US](#)

[Colleges with Smart & Happy Kids & Not Impossible To Get Into](#)

[Great Colleges for B Students](#)

[Best Colleges with Low GPA Requirements](#)

[Best Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities](#)

[Work Colleges - Students Work For Low-Cost Tuition](#)

[Colleges That Change Lives](#) – Founded from Loren Pope’s book *Colleges That Change Lives*

[Best Architecture Colleges](#)

[Best Engineering Schools in US](#)

[Best Pre-Med Schools BA/MD and BS/MD Programs in US](#)

[Best Video Game Design Colleges](#)

[Complete Guide to University of California Schools](#) [15 Best Music Schools](#)

[Best Culinary Schools in US](#)

[Best Information Technology Schools](#)

[Best Criminal Justice Schools](#)

[Best Healthcare Administrations Schools](#)

[Best Performing Arts Colleges](#)

[Five Best Schools for Human Resources Degree](#)

[Ten Best Interior Design Schools in the US](#)

SERVICE ACADEMY INFORMATION

[How To Get Into West Point - Service Academy Information](#)

[20 Things You Need To Know About Getting Into a Military Academy](#)

[Service Academy Forums](#)

[ROTC](#)

ATHLETICS

[Statistics on Sports & College Athletic Scholarships](#) [Know These Recruiting Terms](#)

[Differences Between NAIA & NCAA](#)

FINE ARTS

[Auditioning For College](#)

CHOOSING A MAJOR

[How To Choose A College Major](#)

[What Should I Go To College To Study?](#)

[What To Do with a Psychology Degree?](#)

APPLICATION PROCESS

[Important College Application Deadlines You Can't Miss](#)

[Which Colleges Use the Common Application?](#)

[Link to Common Application](#)

[Colleges That Allow Applicants to Self-Report ACT & SAT Scores](#) – This means you don't have to pay to send your scores until you have been accepted to the college.

[Great List of Honors Examples for Your Application](#)

[Things That Look Good on Your Application](#)

[Common App Activity List Tips](#)

[4 Top Tips for the Common App Honors Section](#)

[Lots of Good Questions to Ask Your College Admissions Rep or College Tour Guide](#)

[College Interview Questions You Should Prepare For](#)

[Who Should I Ask To Write My Letter of Recommendation?](#)

[Examples of Bad Letters of Recommendation From Teachers](#)

[College Essay Guy Resume Templates](#)

[Great Resume Templates - these cost a little bit but worth it](#) Great for recruitment resumé

COLLEGE ADMISSION DECISIONS

[What If I'm Waitlisted?](#)

SCHOLARSHIPS

[Oklahoma's Promise Scholarship Requirements \(Apply during 8th, 9th, or 10th grades\)](#)

[Oklahoma City Community Foundation Scholarships](#)

[FastWeb: Respected Scholarship Finder Resource](#)

[12 Amazing Full-Ride Scholarships](#)

[Best Engineering Scholarships](#)

[Community Service Scholarships](#)

[Fine Art Scholarships \(Dance, Theatre, Music, Art\)](#)

[Best Writing Contests for High School Students](#)

[Scholarships For Bilingual Students](#)

[Scholarships for Hispanic Students](#)

[Scholarships for African American Students](#)

[Easiest Scholarships To Apply For](#)

[Pell Grant Eligibility Requirements](#)

[First-Generation Scholarships](#)

[Best Scholarships for High School Juniors](#)

[10 Truths About Student Loan Debt](#)

[82 Colleges with Full-Ride Scholarships](#)

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

[THE FAFSA Site](#) This is where you will complete the FAFSA. **FAFSA opens October 1.**

[For Parents: Understanding Financial Aid & the FAFSA Application Process](#)

[7 Things You Need To Do for the FAFSA](#)

[Common FAFSA Mistakes](#)

[Myth: I Don't Need to Complete FAFSA; My Parents Make Too Much Money](#)

[Best Private Loans \(US News 2019\)](#)

[Private Loan Comparison Site](#)

STANDARDIZED TESTING: ACT, SAT, AP, PSAT/NMSQT ACT

[How To Register for the ACT](#)

[FREE ACT PREP using Pre-ACT Scores](#)

[How Many Students Get 34-35-36 on ACT?](#)

[Historical ACT Percentiles-2011-2018](#)

[Colleges That Super Score ACT](#)

[Colleges Requiring ALL ACT Scores To Be Sent](#)

[Colleges That Allow Applicants to Self-Report ACT & SAT Scores](#) – This means you don't have to pay to send your scores until you have been accepted to the college.

SAT

[How To Register for the SAT](#)

[Historical SAT Averages Over Time](#)

[Colleges That Allow Applicants to Self-Report ACT & SAT Scores](#) – This means you don't have to pay to send your scores until you have been accepted to the college.

ACT v SAT

[Is the ACT Easier than the SAT?](#)

[ACT versus SAT](#)

[ACT to SAT Conversion Tables](#)

PSAT

What is the PSAT? Everything you need to know. All CCS 9th, 10th, & 11th graders are registered to take the PSAT on the national testing day in October. Parents & students do not need to register themselves for this exam; CCS will take care of it.

[National Merit Semifinalist Cut-Offs for Class of 2021](#)

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

[Average AP Scores for Every AP Exam](#)

[How Does AP Credit Work At Colleges](#)

[AP Scores & Specific College Score Requirements](#)

SERVICE, ENRICHMENT & GAP YEAR OPPORTUNITIES

[Service, Summer, & Gap Year Opportunities](#)

[Service Project Matching Site](#)

[What is a Gap Year?](#)

[Gap Year Counseling Service & Examples of Experiences](#)

[HarvardX - Free Online Courses](#) – If you want to dive deeper into a subject, take an additional course. It's impressive to an admissions committee to see you are seeking ways to learn as much as you can about a subject.

[Coursera - Free Online Courses](#) Another reputable, free online course resource.

GENERAL HIGH SCHOOL QUESTIONS

[How To Be Successful in High School](#)

[What's an Unweighted GPA?](#)

[What's a Weighted GPA?](#)

[What Does a Rigorous High School Course Load Look Like](#)

[The Math Classes You Should Take in High School](#)

[15 Key Differences Between High School And College](#)

[Why Should I Go To College?](#)

[What Should High School Students Do During The Summer](#)

[How to Prepare for Pre-Med in High School](#)

[Why CCS Does Not Rank \(except for Valedictorian & Salutatorian\)](#)

[What's the Deal with Class Rank?](#)

IMPORTANT ACCOUNTS & PASSWORDS SHEET

	WEBSITE	USERNAME	PASSWORD	HINT
SCOIR	www.scoir.com			
ACT	www.actstudent.org			
COLLEGE BOARD (PSAT, SAT, AP)	www.collegeboard.org			
CCU DUAL CREDIT ACCOUNT				

QUICK REFERENCE

CROSSINGS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ADDRESS, PHONE, WEBSITE

14400 N. PORTLAND AVE., OKC, OK. 73134 (405) 842-8495

WWW.CROSSINGSSCHOOL.ORG

CROSSINGS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CEEB CODE: 372717

AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT) WEBSITE & PHONE

WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG / (319) 337-1270

COLLEGE BOARD (AP, PSAT, SAT) WEBSITE & PHONE

WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG / (212) 713-8000

COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY DUAL CREDIT WEBSITE & PHONE

WWW.CCU.EDU/DUALCREDITS / (303) 963-3029

