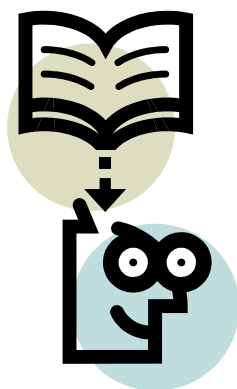


HUNTER COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL
COLLEGE COUNSELING HANDBOOK
2011-2012



2011-2012 COUNSELING OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Ms. Colleen Hennessy
chennessy@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1251

Room 441

9th Grade: Saimoon Ahmed to Ashmita Das

10th Grade: Daniel An to Rowena Chen

11th Grade: Samaya- Abdus-Salaam to
Jonathan Chen

12th Grade: Radin Ahmadian to Sasha Grajdian

Ms. Jenna McLaughlin

jmclaugh@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1270

Room 441

9th Grade: Mitashee Das to Carlman Kang

10th Grade: Cho Lin Chen to Priyanka Khan

11th Grade: Katherine Frank to Hannah Loo

12th Grade: Alec Grossman to Danielle Magwood

Ms. Deborah Greenberg

dgreenbe@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1272

Room 436

9th Grade: Harry Katz to Rachel Retica

10th Grade: Nava Kidon to Xiu Phu

11th Grade: Karen Chen to Nina Dabhade
and Penelope Lusk to Matthew Slonim

12th Grade: Monica Majumder to Penn Weinberger

Ms. Jennifer Chang

jchang@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1271

Room 441

9th Grade: Stephanie Rice-Hoffner to Elvan Ziyalan

10th Grade: Mateo Pomi to Max Zhou

11th Grade: Wenyu Deng to Jessie Frank
and Emma Smith to Richard Zou

12th Grade: Jeffery Tam to Lina Zhu

Ms. Lee Weinberg

lweinber@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1452

Room 436

7th Grade Counselor

Ms. Sheila Garcia

sgarcia@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1269

Room 441

8th Grade Counselor

Ms. Alison Ferst, Substance Abuse Prevention and Education

646-963-6246

Room 441 A

aferst@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

Ms. Deidre Engram, Guidance Secretary

dengram@hccs.hunter.cuny.edu

212-860-1268

Room 441

Ms. Laurie Slodounik and Ms. Danielle Benveniste

Clinical Psychology Fellow

Available Mondays and Fridays

646-963-6246

IN THE BEGINNING

You are at the beginning of the college choice process. At the end, you will have made choices and have undergone an important stage of every Hunter student's education.

The college counselor will enter into a significant relationship with you and will attempt to guide and advise you through the college process. Our hope is that you will learn a great deal about yourself. For Hunter seniors, this choice involves much thought and time. Therefore, consider your college goals when thinking through your senior year program.

Each student starts the college process in his or her own unique way. Some have already made choices while others have no idea of what they wish to do for the next four years. Some students are anxious, others seem calm. There is no right or wrong way to begin this educational experience. Start by exploring colleges in your own unique way. It is important that your counselor learn how you approach tasks and how she/he can help you make constructive choices for yourself.

Some students make the error of trying to be the person they think colleges want them to be. While it is important to learn about colleges, the key for students is to clearly define their unique interests and strengths. In other words, start with knowing yourself well. Let the college choices flow from that. Remember, family, friends, teachers and counselor, coupled with your own inner strength, can be the power base from which you achieve your desired goal.

This book is a guide. Keep it and use it to help you through your college choices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	p. 5
Chapter I: College Process Timeline	p. 6
Chapter II: Where Do I Start?	p. 10
Chapter III: A First List of Colleges	p. 18
Chapter IV: What Do Colleges Look For?	p. 27
Chapter V: The Application Process	p. 34
Chapter VI: Financial Aid	p. 43
Chapter VII: Students with Special Talents	p. 47
Chapter VIII: Students Interested in Career-Related Majors	p. 50
Chapter IX: Thick Envelope or Thin?	p. 54
Chapter X: Appendices	p. 55
A. HCHS Counseling Office Policies and Procedures	p. 55
B. Glossary of College Terms	p. 57
C. The College Folder	p. 62
D. A Short Introduction to Naviance	p. 63
E. How to Calculate Your GPA	p. 66
F. Partnership Agreement	p. 68
G. Reading List	p. 70

INTRODUCTION

In the transitional time of adolescence, the task of identifying goals for a direction after high school is especially important. After years spent in the structured, predictable environments of grade school through high school, students are presented with choices leading in very different directions. This is the area where family agendas and personal agendas come together, and where, under the spotlight of the high school milieu, a student's hopes are explored, focused and given direction.

Applying to college is an intense and lengthy process. It can be confusing and anxiety-ridden. It is a time when you will be asked to evaluate yourself, your strengths and your weaknesses, in ways you have never done before. It is a time when you will be making important life decisions, perhaps for the first time as a young adult.

Through it all, it will be easy to lose sight of how much control you have in this process. This manual was prepared to provide you with some of the answers to the questions you may have as you face the year ahead of you. The more you know, the better you will be able to take control, and the greater the likelihood that you will make informed and reasonable decisions. And although it is you who must ultimately make these important decisions, remember that there are people at Hunter ready and willing to assist and guide you.

The ten chapters of this handbook will help give you the tools to organize the college process.

- Chapter I: Refer to this timeline for month-by-month checklists of what to do and when.
- Chapter II: Establish your own criteria for college, based on in-depth self-evaluation.
- Chapter III: Assemble your preliminary list of colleges, research them, and evaluate them, based on your criteria.
- Chapter IV: Find out what tools the colleges will use to evaluate your application.
- Chapter V: Prepare a final list and complete your applications.
- Chapter VI: Find out how to apply for financial aid.
- Chapters VII and VIII: What to do if you have special talents or career interests.
- Chapter IX: What happens when the answers arrive.
- Chapter X: Useful glossaries and other support information.

CHAPTER I: COLLEGE PROCESS TIMELINE

Timeline for Juniors in the College Application Process

September onward

- Continue contributing to your college folder in your counselor's office.
- Focus on your classwork and extracurricular activities!

October

- Take the PSAT's.

November

- Parents: Attend Grade 10-11 College Night, at which a panel of College Admissions Representatives will speak about the college process.

February

- The college kick-off!
- Meet the counselor night on February 16th (parents only).
- Plan College visits during President's week (if possible).
- You should have a timetable for your standardized test schedule. This should include one SAT I, two or three SAT II Subject Tests, and/or the ACT with Writing. Consult with your counselor if you do not have a firm plan.
- Registration date for the March 10th SAT I is February 10th.
- If you have not done so already, complete the "Personality Type" survey and the "Learning Profile" on Naviance. In addition, complete the "College Process (1): Student Information Profile" and "My Game Plan" surveys on Naviance. These should all be done no later than the Senior Speak college workshops in March.

March

- Continue exploring Naviance Family Connection from home.
- Make sure the email address on your Naviance account is correct. Email will be our primary method of communication. You must check your email regularly throughout this process.
- Become familiar with the information on the college bulletin boards next to and across from room 441. They will announce Fall visitations from colleges, special programs, test dates, and financial aid information. Most of this information will also be available on Naviance.
- Attend the Senior Speak college workshop given by your counselors the week of March 12-16. You will be notified of all workshops via email and they will also be posted on the bulletin boards outside of the counseling office.
- Information regarding test registration deadlines and costs can be found at www.collegeboard.com and www.actstudent.org. Test registration is your responsibility. Ask your counselor if you qualify for fee waivers.
- Registration dates for the May 5th SAT I/II is April 6th, the registration date for the June 2nd SAT I/II is May 5th. If you choose to take the ACT the registration date for the

- April 14th ACT is March 9th and the registration date for the June 9th ACT is May 4th.
- Continue your individual meetings with your counselor and continue planning college visits.
 - Purchase a college guidebook and begin to learn about a wide variety of colleges. Fiske makes a great guide, as do many others. Fiske guide reviews of colleges are available on Naviance for free. Unigo.com and collegeprowler.com are also good resources.

April

- Attend College Fair workshop held by your counselor the week of April 16-20.
- Attend College Fair on April 25th (after the half-day). Your parents may attend (tickets distributed at the College Fair workshop).

May

- Research admissions procedures/requirements and financial aid information from all the colleges that interest you.
- Continue to add materials to your online profile on Naviance and complete any required surveys.
- Attend Loose Ends Essay Writing workshop the week of May 21-25 and continue meeting with your counselor.
- Create a chart of extracurricular activities (instead of a traditional resume – your counselor will give you an example).
- Complete “College Process (2): Spring Review” survey on Naviance by May 27th.

June

- Continue your college research.
- Encourage your parents to complete the Parent Statement on Naviance by June 15th.
- Become familiar with the Common Application (www.commonapp.org). The 2012-2013 application will be available August 1st.

Summer

- Keep visiting schools, collecting information and applications, discussing your college choices with your family, gathering materials that support your strengths and working on your college essay.
- Fill your summer with experiences that stimulate and refresh you, as well as those which reflect your interests, skills and ways you plan to grow.

Junior Summer Check List for the College Process

In addition to participating in summer activities, reading some good books, and relaxing, here are our suggestions for what you should get done this summer. The more you do in June, July, and August the better off you will be when you return to school in September.

____ Visit and continue to research schools. Narrow your list to 8-10 schools with 2-3 schools in each of the following categories: Reach, Possible, and Likely. Update your prospective college list on Naviance when you make changes.

___ Complete the Common Application, and write a complete response to one of the 500-word Common Application essay topics. (www.commonapp.org)

___ When available, download and review supplements to colleges and draft responses to questions on supplements.

___ Register for all appropriate fall test dates. These might include the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the SAT Subject Tests for October and November and/or the ACT in October.

___ Spend some time preparing for the SAT or ACT if you plan to take either one in the fall. You can do this independently by reading some good books, reading the *New York Times* each day, and familiarizing yourself with the test format by through use of practice materials and practice tests; or you might consider taking an SAT-prep course at home.

___ Research all merit and need-based financial aid programs and deadlines.

Timeline for Seniors in the College Application Process

September

- Create a plan for completing any necessary standardized testing.
- Attend “Pushing Buttons!” workshop for specific information regarding how to complete your applications.
- Submit your “College Process (3): Fall Forward.” *Your college recommendation cannot be written until it is submitted.*
- Make an appointment with your counselor to begin focusing on your college choices. If you are interested in applying early, discuss this with your counselor immediately.
- Attend lunchtime meetings with College Representatives. Check the counseling office bulletin board and Naviance for the schedule. Attendance is helpful to you and presents us as having an interested and vital student body.
- Familiarize yourself with the CSS Profile for financial aid. Make a timetable with financial aid deadlines that you will need to meet.
- Consider what you have put in your counseling folder and whether you need to add more materials. Discuss this with your counselor.
- Collect information and applications from colleges.
- If you plan on applying early, update two teachers who agree to write your college recommendations about your plans. Usually, the same teachers will write recommendations for all of your college choices. You are only allowed to ask two teachers for recommendations.
- Ask a friend (or two!) to write you a Peer Recommendation to give to your counselor.

October

- Write a description statement for your Hunter Scholars Program, internship, independent study, or off campus course. This should be sent to each college with your part of the application.

- Continue attending meetings with college representatives during lunch and set up visits to the schools you are considering.
- If you choose to apply early, submit your Early Decision/Early Action applications. Don't forget to send out your standardized test scores with your early applications.
- Submit applications with rolling deadlines.
- Read carefully and organize your college information and materials. We recommend making a timeline for each application.

November

- Continue making selection of schools. If you have not yet already done so, begin filling out your regular (non-early) applications.
- You should finalize your college choices by the end of this month by entering it into Naviance.
- If you apply early, check your college's Financial Aid website for deadlines and any necessary materials.

December

- Keep track of all the deadlines for your applications. Meeting deadlines is your responsibility.
- Have the College Board send your SAT I and SAT II scores to each of your college choices. Additional score report forms are available in the Counseling Office.

January

- Submit any and all remaining applications.
- Send in your FAFSA form as early as possible after January 1st and before February 15th.
- Submit Mid-Year Report forms (with present courses written in) to the Counseling Office. Do not forget the stamped, addressed envelopes (one stamp).

February

- Take this opportunity to learn a new skill to continue to grow as a person and to enjoy your senior year. This will help to ease the waiting time.
- Keep in contact with your counselor and inform them of any new information you receive.

February through April 15th

- Wait for your acceptance letters.

May 1st

- Make your college selection.
- AP Exams.

June

- Graduation!

CHAPTER II: WHERE DO I START?

College Admissions: A National Perspective

Each year roughly 2.5 million students enroll in a college for the first time. An even more staggering number to consider is the 20,664 valedictorians produced each year by this nation's high schools. That is enough valedictorians to fill the freshman classes at all the Ivy League colleges, plus Stanford, Rice and Notre Dame and still be left with 3,500 valedictorians!

We think the biggest trap families can fall into as they approach this process is to merely consider the academic reputation of an institution. While that is certainly important, the prestige of an institution in the eyes of the world has absolutely no bearing on a student's ability to thrive on its campus. For a student to try and "fit" himself/herself into an institution based solely on academic reputation is a mistake.

Students typically begin to research colleges during their junior year. By the end of your junior year, you should have **a working list of about twenty colleges** that you investigate during the spring and summer. By the fall of your senior year, you will have deleted schools from the list and added others. Your goal is to develop a final list of about ten schools, at any one of which you would be happy and successful if you were to find yourself there as a student.

Myths About Colleges

In considering where to begin the process, it is useful to get some of the myths about it out of the way. In their book *College Match*, published by Octameron Press, Steven Antonoff and Marie Friedemann discuss ten myths about the college selection process. They are:

Colleges are either good or bad.

By whose criteria is the "goodness" or "badness" of a college measured? Instead of asking the question, "Is X a good college?" you should ask, "Is X a good college for me?"

Future employers and graduate schools give an edge to those who have degrees from prestigious universities.

Not necessarily. Employers and graduate schools are more interested in your accomplishments and what you have to offer than the name of the college you attended.

Colleges always choose the "best" students.

The admission process is a human one, and it might not always be what you would consider to be fair. You might be admitted to schools that are not appropriate for you.

Colleges are looking to create a coherent and complete class, so students who are less qualified than you in some ways might be admitted to schools that you wanted to attend but that did not admit you.

The more rigorous the admission standards, the higher the quality of education.

Wrong. Admission statistics could have a lot to do with a recent performance by one of the school's athletic teams, a mention in a national magazine, or its sweatshirt being worn by someone on a popular television show. Many excellent colleges have applicant pools that are self-selective, so their admission rates are higher. Many state schools have quotas for in- and out-of-state students. The numbers have little to do with quality.

Cost is really important in determining where I can go to college, so I may not be able to attend the college I want to attend.

It is true, unfortunately, that ability to pay for your education is playing a larger role in the admission process today than it did a few years ago, but ability to pay should not be your first criterion for not applying to a school you would like to attend. There is a lot of money available from many sources to help needy students pay for college – you just have to do a lot of research, take an active role in the pursuit of assistance, and be creative. See the chapter in this handbook on financial aid.

Test scores are the most important criterion in college admission.

You will read more about this later in this handbook, but in fact, this is not true for most colleges. Because of the changes in the SAT content and scoring, some colleges have even made the SAT optional. Many state universities, the military academies, and some technical and engineering schools do use cut-off scores, but the vast majority of colleges look at all parts of your application and what you will bring to their campus community. Your standardized test scores might get you into the ballpark of the applicant pool, and they may keep you out at other places. But in the end, for most colleges, your high school transcript (school, courses, and grades) will be most important.

There is only one perfect college for me.

There is no perfect college, and each year thousands of students transfer from the schools they thought were perfect.

I am a failure if I do not get into College X.

There are many reasons you might not be accepted to a particular college. Perhaps this year they are looking for tuba players from rural areas. Remember that you are in high school in one of the best-educated and most college-bound areas of the country.

Competition is tough, and a denial is not necessarily a reflection of your qualifications. Please don't judge your own self-worth by a single college's acceptance or denial. You're better than that.

Other Myths About the College Application Process:

I need to decide on my career before I can choose a college.

College is your time to explore. Except in a few specific situations, you can choose a major in your sophomore year and still complete the degree in four years. A surprising number of students discover their ideal field while taking a course they didn't expect to like. If you're not ready, don't let well-meaning friends pressure you into deciding on a

major field or a career before you choose a college. Take your time.

If I haven't heard of a college or university, it can't be very good.

You may not hear about many of the nation's finest colleges until you are well into your adult life. Athletics on television is how most colleges get to be known, but many great colleges do not get that kind of exposure. Some of the nation's finest colleges don't play big-time athletics. Judge a college on its own merits. Don't let name recognition determine a good or bad college.

A lot of out-of-class activities will compensate for poor grades.

Admittedly, colleges consider out-of-class activities such as athletics, student government, and music when they review an application. But colleges look at your academic performance first. Lots of out-of-class activities help only if the college already believes you can do the work. "The thicker the file, the thicker the child" is an expression admissions counselors use when a prospective student submits materials on all that he or she has done, but the student still has poor high-school grades.

Big colleges are best if you haven't decided on a major field.

Many students think that because there are more courses to choose from, a large college offers greater options for undecided students. However, choices alone should not be the deciding factor. If you are undecided, the best college is one that has core requirements or distribution requirements that ensure you will explore new areas and fields.

Also, look for colleges with the strongest academic advising and career counseling programs regardless of their size. Good advising can help you choose an academic and career path you will enjoy rather than one you think you might like right now.

The quality of the academic program in which I am interested is the most important characteristic of a college.

About two of five students change their major fields of interest before they actually enroll in college, and about one of two changes the major field once enrolled. Look for a college that has your current field of interest but is also strong in all its areas.

It's worth noting that the research on success in graduate school and in employment after college suggests that the best way to master a major field is a combination of learning theory and active, hands-on-learning by doing. What's more valuable is having the opportunity to do research on your own or to work side by side with a professor on a project rather than simply taking more courses in the field.

The best time to visit colleges is after you have been admitted.

Many students have fallen for this myth only to find that none of the colleges to which they were admitted "felt" right when they visited. If possible, visit before you apply and again after you have been admitted. If you can visit only once, make it before you apply.

College is for only four years.

This is wrong on two fronts: 1) You can't trade in your degree for another one if you didn't go to the best college for you the first time. Your college is with you for life. 2) Only about one of five students completes college in four years. In fact, only two of five students complete college in six years. If you plan to be out of college in four years, learn what each college's four-year graduation rate is.

Your life will be ruined if you don't get admitted to your first choice college.

Thousands of students each year do not get admitted to their first choice college and most are happy, healthy individuals today. Yes, rejection is hard on your ego, but you will not be alone. Additionally, the vast majority of students who settle for their second choice end up happy at that institution anyway. Remember, college admission, especially at the more selective colleges, has to be subjective. With thousands of applications and only a small staff, it is impossible to assess each applicant objectively. Some applications stand out. Some don't.

You will have a better chance of getting into professional or graduate school if you go to a university that offers these graduate programs.

Many students and parents mistakenly think that attending a university with a law school, medical school, or graduate school guarantees admission into that program at graduation. Very few universities give their students special preference for graduate study, and those that do reserve it for only the very best students. Many small colleges and universities have excellent records in placing students in professional schools and graduate programs. The key to admission is succeeding in a strong major program at a challenging college, not where you go. Regardless of where you attend, there are no guarantees.

Liberal arts colleges do not have good science programs.

The "liberal" in liberal arts means "broadening" and "freeing" – as in freeing one's mind from narrow thinking. The term "liberal arts" is a shortened version of the full title: liberal arts and sciences. Most liberal arts colleges have been emphasizing science for all students for a century or more. Since the best way to learn science is by doing science, small colleges with small classes and fewer students in the laboratories often have an advantage. Proportionally, far more physicians and Ph.D.s have earned their undergraduate degrees from small liberal arts colleges than from large universities.

Residence Halls are simply places in which to sleep.

This is true at many large institutions, but it is not at smaller colleges. At "residential colleges" the staff takes advantage of the 24-hour learning experience. Many small colleges have regular activities in the residence halls ranging from those focusing on wellness and personal growth to film festivals and Super Bowl parties. A residential college offers a unique time in your life to blend your academic, social, personal, and recreational life. The famous college tradition, the late night "bull session", often deals in subject matter from academic courses, personal beliefs, and arguments over the views of famous philosophers. Residential life can add a great deal to your college experience.

Large universities have greater diversity.

This is true if "diversity" simply means having greater numbers of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and international students. Unfortunately, the size and nature of a large university often mean that there is little interaction among those of various ethnic and racial backgrounds. At large universities, groups of students can often choose to live and learn together and separately from other students. At small schools, however, the student population is small enough that you will get to know well, or in passing, virtually all students. If the value of diversity is to learn to understand and appreciate other cultures and groups, then small colleges often offer greater diversity.

Colleges are concerned only with my intellectual and academic development.

Many colleges and smaller universities pride themselves on their ability to "develop the whole person". Some of this personal development comes from requiring a broad-based general education that contributes to your understanding of the world and society. Some of the personal growth takes place in the residence halls where you learn things like tolerance and how to get along with different kinds of people. In some cases, personal and professional development is intentional. At these colleges, there are workshops open to students on time management, developing relationships, handling yourself at a job interview, and your responsibilities as a citizen.

Only the very best students receive financial aid from colleges.

If you are admitted and have financial need, colleges generally want to make it possible for you to attend. In fact, the greatest proportion of financial assistance at private colleges tends to go to students in the middle of the class. High-ability students or students with special talents may receive "merit-based scholarships".

State-supported institutions offer more financial aid than private colleges do.

State-supported colleges and universities offer very little of their own resources for financial assistance. As the name suggests, state-supported institutions are subsidized by their respective states and that allows them to charge less. However, state institutions are also more likely to offer only loans to students who do not have a high need.

The federal government provides most of the financial aid.

Government funds comprise only a very small proportion of the financial aid available. In fact, the government continually reduces the amount of grant money – money that does not need to be paid back. Private colleges, especially, supply the largest portion of financial aid.

Some secret strategy can get me admitted to a college.

In our society and neighborhood, where money can buy almost anything, it is easy to believe this. Impressive letters of recommendation from famous people and gimmicky application or essay approaches will not get you into a school. YOU and your record will get YOU into a college – perhaps with a lot of guidance, assistance and support – but it will be YOU, and there is no secret strategy for any school.

What Kind of College Do I Want? Self-Evaluation

It is up to you to decide what you want in a college. Your goals, values, interests and preferences will be important factors in determining which colleges belong on your initial list.

You must also become a good consumer in the college market. For the next year of your life, you will be the target of college public relations specialists who will send you reams of advertisements in the hope of getting you to apply. Unless you begin with some framework about what you are looking for in a college, you will easily become overwhelmed by the information sent to you.

We suggest that you ask yourself some preliminary questions about college as you begin to assemble your list. Some appear below. If your answer to any of the questions is "I don't care," or "That doesn't matter to me," then you are probably not approaching this task seriously enough. Four years is a long time to spend in one place!

What Kind of College?

- What do you want in an education? Why do you want to go to college?
- What kinds of surroundings are essential to your well-being? Are there certain places, activities, particular terrains, or weather conditions that make you happy? Do you prefer a fast-paced environment where something is happening most of the time? An organized environment where you can join a wide variety of planned activities? A more serene and relaxed environment where you can go your own way?
- What degree of academic challenge is best for you? What balance of study, activities, and social life suits you best? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues, and discussions? Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard or one where you can make respectable grades without knocking yourself out? Is it important to you to be at the top of your class, or would you be satisfied to be in the middle or bottom of your college class? How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
- How important to you is contact with faculty? Do you enjoy interacting with Hunter faculty and speaking with them outside the classroom? Do you like a lot of attention from faculty? Do you like lively classroom discussions in which you are an active participant, or do you prefer the idea of being anonymous in large lectures? How would it feel if your teachers did not know your name?
- How do you want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
- What interests do you want to pursue in college? Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities? Consider all of your interests, such

as fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities. Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training or general knowledge and skills of inquisitive thinking?

- How would you feel about going to a college where you were rarely told what to do, or what courses to take? How much structure and direction do you need?
- How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country? How often do you want to be able to go home? What kind of changes in your lifestyle and perspective might be exciting? Or distressing and overwhelming?
- Where would your family like to see you go to school? What kinds of financial considerations exist?
- What amount of risk do you want to assume in your selection of schools? How will you feel about yourself if you are rejected at one or more of your top choices? How do you plan to select your colleges so that you set yourself up for success?

The Big Picture Questions

- What has worked well about Hunter for you? What would you change about it?
- What has worked well about living in New York City for you? What would you change about it?
- How has your environment influenced your way of thinking?
- How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by your school and home?
- What do your parents and friends expect of you?
- How have their experiences influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself?
- What pressures have you felt to conform?
- What distresses you most about the world around you?
- Assuming the obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start?
- How would someone who knows you well describe you?
- What are your finest qualities?
- What are you most conspicuous shortcomings?

- How have you grown, or what changes have you made during your high school years?
- What relationships are most important to you and why?

CHAPTER III: A FIRST LIST OF COLLEGES

A Good Fit

Perfectionism haunts us, derailing efforts before they start: “How can I pick just the right school?” The best way to start the college search may be to put aside for now, the idea of the “right school.” There are more than 3,400 two- and four-year colleges in the United States. Every student aspires to find a college that is “a good fit,” and it is very possible to achieve this goal. Students and parents should keep in mind, though, that there is seldom just one right school and 3,399 wrong schools. In reality, there are a number of “right” colleges and universities out there just waiting to be discovered by a student and his/her family.

The college you select should fit YOU; the only colleges which deserve the title good, better, or best, are the ones that are that for YOU. Chances are, you will be able to find a half dozen colleges, all of which have the characteristics you are seeking. Invest yourself in your search and in this process. Don't forget that you do have control, but also responsibility. The "process" involves three primary decisions, and YOU make two of them: Where you will apply and which school you actually attend among those to which you were admitted.

Gary Ripple, the former Dean of Admissions at Lafayette College, quoted in Money Magazine's 1990 College Guide, said, "Too many families act as though they must find the one right school. But you're not looking for a needle in a haystack. That will make you crazy. You're searching for a school where you'll do well and be happy, and there are probably dozens of schools like that for each applicant. Most people who put in the time and effort to make an informed decision are going to have a good outcome." As you formulate the list of colleges, you should remember the Golden Rule of the college admissions process: Never apply to a college that you would not gladly attend if offered the choice.

You are ready to start your list. You will be collecting, organizing, and evaluating information, using the criteria that you have established through your self-evaluation.

Organizing Information

You will be collecting and processing large amounts of paper and information during the next year. Follow these steps to organize college information and applications.

1. Keep notes on the colleges and a list of things to do in a notebook. You may want to set up a data file on a home computer. Set up columns of likes and dislikes, pros and cons for the different characteristics you've decided that your “ideal” college must have. Take particular notes of special programs and requirements.

2. Make and keep a separate folder or file for each college.
3. Use a long-term calendar, one that has lots of room on which to write notes. Note on the calendar the deadlines for applications, test scores, recommendations, interviews, etc. Record due dates and write down the dates you sent/requested each item required for the admission or financial aid applications. Record college fairs, interviews, college visits, and special programs on the calendar.
4. Read and respond promptly to all information sent by the colleges.
5. Take time to read and think about the information provided by each college. Your notes assist in comparing all colleges using the same criteria.
6. Make copies of every application for admission and financial aid before mailing the original forms. Meet all deadlines to apply for admission and financial aid.

List of Criteria

You may want to create a list of questions, based on your self-evaluation, which you will answer for each college that you investigate. Such questions could include:

Admission

1. How selective is the college?
2. Realistically, what are your chances of getting in?
3. Difficulty: Will the work be challenging or too easy? Is it a grind school? A party school?
4. Financial Aid – what kind is offered?
5. What will it cost, including tuition, fees, room and board, transportation, travel to and from campus, pocket money?

Physical Environment

1. Is the location rural, suburban or urban?
2. How many students does it have?
3. How far is it from home?
4. Are the students mostly commuters or resident?
5. Is campus housing available and guaranteed for all four years? Can you choose coed or single sex dorms?
6. Safety: Are the dorms secure? Is there an escort service at night?
7. Facilities: Are there adequate sports and recreational facilities? Music, art, drama? Where do students eat? What meal plans are offered?

Academic Environment

1. Quality of programs: What are the strengths and weaknesses?
2. Does the college offer academic programs in which you are interested?
3. Faculty: Do students have access to faculty? Do all professors teach undergraduates? How many classes are taught by teaching assistants?

4. Curriculum: Is there a core curriculum? How much freedom do you have in course selection? What courses must you take to satisfy requirements?
5. Library: How many books are in the library? Is it fully computerized? Is the campus tied to a larger network?
6. Computers: Are computers required of freshmen? What kinds of computer facilities are available on campus?
7. Advanced Placement: Does the school accept AP credits? For what scores?
8. Honors Programs: Are they available? Who is eligible?
9. Study Abroad: Is it offered?
10. Internships: What is available? Do any of them pay a salary or stipend?
11. Graduation Rates: What percentage of students graduate? How long does it take most students to graduate?
12. Graduate School: What percentages of students go on to graduate or professional schools? What percentages are accepted to the school of their choice?
13. Career Opportunities: How many graduates go directly into the marketplace? Is there a helpful career services office?

Student Environment

1. Student Body: How would you describe a “typical” student? What is the male/female ratio?
2. Geographical Diversity: Is the college regional, or does it attract students from all over the US? Are there international students?
3. Ethnic Diversity: What percentages of students are considered students of color? How well does the institution address issues that concern students of color?
4. Athletic Programs: In which division does the college compete? Are there equally strong programs for men and women? Does the school offer a variety of intercollegiate and intramural sports programs?
5. Social Life: Is there a wide range of social activities? What do students do on a typical Saturday night? Or Wednesday night? How important are fraternities and sororities?

NOTE: This list of questions was adapted from “The Boston Latin School College Handbook” by permission of the Counseling Office at Boston Latin School.

Research: Sources of Information on Colleges

There are many sources of information on colleges. The type of information available from these different sources is as varied as the sources themselves. Do your college investigation homework with the help of the following:

- **Counselors:** We are available to help you weigh the pluses and minuses of different colleges and can help steer you in the direction of schools that might be good matches for you.
- **HCHS graduates and other current students:** Perhaps the best source of information on a college is someone who is a student there now.

- **Alumni:** Information from people who have already graduated from a college is obviously not as current as that from a student attending now, but alumni are nevertheless a valuable source of information about a college.
- **College admission publications:** Colleges and universities spend millions of dollars each year on the production of literature designed to inform you and educate you about their institutions. The Counseling Office has catalogs and view books from schools available for your perusal. College catalogs are not flashy, but they contain information you might find helpful, including academic and student life policies, requirements for degrees in all of the departments at that school, a listing and description of all of the courses offered, and a listing of the faculty members. The view books are slick, photo-filled marketing tools designed to show you what the campus is really like. The text is brief, but most view books list programs available at the school as well as its activities and organizations. They also contain practical information on the admission procedure, as well as financial aid information. Many view books have applications inserted in them.
- **Writing for your own information:** If you have not already, you will be receiving literature from many colleges and universities who have purchased your name and address from any one of a number of sources. Chances are, however, there are other schools about which you will want to learn more. More and more students are using e-mail to communicate directly with colleges and through your internet access at school or at home, you can do the same.
- **Guidebooks:** There are many college guidebooks available at bookstores. The guidebooks fall into two main categories: **objective** or comparative guides, and **subjective** or ranking guides. The first type includes such books as those published by Peterson's, Barron's, Lovejoy's, Arco, and the College Handbook by the College Board. Most of the information included in these guides was obtained directly by the publishers from the admission offices. They provide quick-reference information and a lot of statistics. Be careful! Statistics can be manipulated to suit the needs of the person or institution presenting them. The subjective guides include those by Fiske, the Yale Daily News, Rugg, William Buckley, Princeton Review, Kaplan and *Students' Guide to Colleges* edited by Jordan Goldman and Colleen Buyers. When reading these guides and reviewing the manner in which they rate various aspects of the institutions they are discussing, keep in mind that you are reading the opinions of only a few people. On the other hand, even though the information will be two or three years old, it is possible to read several such descriptions and put together a good idea of what life at the school might be like.
- **Online:** All colleges and universities have home pages on the World Wide Web. What you will find on the pages will vary greatly from college to college, but typically you will find the most current and detailed information available about the school and its application procedures. Some sites include "virtual" tours, and

others allow you to apply electronically to the institution. Most sites have some sort of e-mail link to communicate directly with the admission office.

- ***HCHS Admission Statistics (a.k.a. Naviance):*** If you like numbers, you will probably enjoy looking through a website which contains the admissions history of recent HCHS graduates at popular colleges and universities. The information is presented not by the name of each student, but by his/her grade point average and verbal and math SAT scores. The information allows you to assess how realistic a school might be for you based on these numbers.
- ***College fairs:*** Each spring, Hunter College High School sponsors a College Fair for juniors and their parents. The fair is planned for the afternoon of Wednesday, April 27th. Representatives from many colleges in the United States, Canada and Europe will attend the college fair, providing an excellent opportunity for students and their parents to gain first-hand information about colleges of interest to them. The National Association of College Admission Counselors also sponsors larger college fairs around the country which bring together representatives from a few hundred colleges. Information on the fair in Manhattan, held in April, will be posted on a bulletin board outside the Counseling Office. This fair and others are good forums for you to talk briefly with the representatives, pick up literature, and put your name on their mailing lists. The best time to visit the national fairs is in the evening when the crowds are smaller.
- ***College representative visits at HCHS:*** Each fall many colleges and universities send admission representatives to HCHS to speak with students and answer their questions. The presentations are a convenient way for students to establish contact with an admission office and to learn more about the school and its application procedures from someone working there. The meetings are also a good chance for you to learn more about schools about which you might know very little. You should attend at least a couple of the meetings just to find out what they are like and to hear what an admission officer has to say to prospective applicants. One added benefit to the meetings is that, in many cases, the representative will be one of the people who will be reading the applications from HCHS and then contributing to the decisions made by the admission office. It is definitely to your advantage if that person gets to know you as a person rather than as just another application. Arrive at the meetings on time and with at least some knowledge of the school so that you can ask informed, intelligent questions and make a good impression. Locations for the meetings are announced by the Counseling Office on the large white board outside the Room 441 and on Naviance (under “About College” click on “Visit Schedule”).
- ***Interested?*** A word about the amount of interest you show in a college: Just about every college will keep track of how much interest you are showing in that school. They know how many times you have requested information in writing or by phone, they know if you spoke with a representative at a college fair or at a meeting at HCHS, and they know if you have been on campus and had an

interview. Regardless of how many times you have been asked to complete information cards for an admission office—on that campus or elsewhere—do it again. Also, remember that the more personal you can make the process, the better it can work in your favor. Get to know someone in the admission office—that person could be an important advocate for you later.

Research: Campus Visits

Before you become too serious about attending any school, it is very important that you spend some time there to "get a feel for the place." Spring break, summer vacation, and weekends are good times for you to visit campuses, and you should do so with your family at those times. All admission offices offer campus tours and information sessions for prospective students. Call in advance or check the website to find out when they are scheduled. Plan to spend half a day on campus, and if possible, wander around on your own.

You should try to revisit those schools in which you are most interested at a time when classes are in session. Most college admission offices will arrange for you to spend a night in a dorm, attend classes, and eat in the cafeteria.

When visiting a college, try to simulate as best you can what life there will be like. How large are the freshman classes? Do you like the food? The dorms? What information can you learn from the flyers posted around campus? The school newspaper? How are people dressed? How far do you have to walk to get to classes? Do the people walking around look happy? Consider the questions that you devised for colleges after your self-evaluation, and see what answers you get. Visit campuses with a critical eye and do your homework on the school before you go. How does it measure up?

More Tips to Make the Most of College Visits

Once you have completed some preliminary research on colleges, you ought to have a good idea of which ones merit further investigation – i.e. a visit. Visiting college campuses is crucial for two reasons:

1. You are able to gain a feel for the campus, students, academic departments, and areas that interest you specifically, rather than those that interest the editor of the view book.
2. You can demonstrate your interest in the school, and simultaneously apply the homework you have done prior to your visit.

When you're visiting a school, your goal ought to be to balance the impressions you have gained from your preliminary research with your own personal instincts. In other words, don't believe everything that you read or hear, but use the information to guide you towards asking the right questions in the limited time that you have on any given campus. Be tactful, but ask good questions of the right people at each school you visit. That might mean setting up a meeting with someone in the English Department, the Athletic

Department, or with the editor of the college's newspaper. Whoever it is, make the most of your visit and let people know that you are interested.

When to Plan Your College Visits

The best way to gain a gut feeling about a school is to visit it when the students are in session. Unfortunately, since you are also enrolled as a student, this is not always possible. Do your best to visit when you can see the students, sit in on a lecture, meet faculty members from the departments in which you are interested, etc. You should certainly call the schools on your list to determine their school calendar and if/when they offer interviews, here are several blocks of time during which you and your family could consider visiting schools:

Maximizing Your College Visits

While it is possible to have a successful college weekend with very little prior planning, the best way to make the most of your visit is to plan ahead. If you're going to visit schools with your parent(s), make sure you sit down with mom and/or dad to plan a calendar of visits. Your parents most likely want to help you in this process in every way that they can. Ask them for advice about calling schools, or ask them to help you set up appointments. Of course, it's best if you do most of the legwork yourself, because you will appreciate the effort that went into your visit and learn more in the long run. Here are a few thoughts to get you going on planning your visit and setting up meetings with the appropriate people:

1. Plan to spend at least half a day at the school.
2. Call the admissions office to arrange an interview if they offer interviews on campus. If they don't, schedule an alumni interview in your hometown.
3. Incorporate one of the school's general information sessions into your day.
4. Niche interviews: If you don't know them already, ask the admissions office for the name(s) and phone numbers/e-mail addresses of the athletic coaches, and/or the music/art/drama/dance professors who represent your interests. Contact them to let them know that you are coming and ask whether you might meet with them or someone in their department.
5. Academic interviews: Call the departments in which you are specifically interested and repeat step 'd.' Remember, this is a time for you to continue your research into the academic departments as well as to establish contacts!
6. Contact any friends/acquaintances/Hunter alumni you know at the school and try to meet them for coffee or lunch (if you can't stay with them). These are frequently the best sources for the inside scoop ... but remember to maintain your objectivity and form your own opinion.

Etiquette During and After Your Visit

When you visit a school, remember that you are representing both yourself and HCHS. In other words, act naturally but remember that what you do or say may ultimately impact your standing in the admissions office. You will never understand the complexities of each school's network, so assume that everyone you meet is in some way connected to

the admissions process and treat them with due respect. This means dressing appropriately for your visit and conducting yourself in a positive manner: from your initial handshake, to your undivided attention, to your parting thanks and gracious good-bye. Remember, you have requested to spend time with their staff, so make the most of the opportunity.

After Your Visit

It is always a good idea to send a thank you note if you met with anyone individually or had an interview. While this note may wind up in your admissions file, at some point along the way, the best reason for doing so reverts to basic rules of courtesy. Especially with the ease of e-mail, a brief note is an effortless way to show your appreciation for someone having spent time with you.

Make Every Piece of Communication Count

Whenever you contact the admissions offices at the schools to which you are applying, assume that your phone call, e-mail, letter, or fax is recorded and added to your file. Make it concise, polished, and something that accurately conveys your character and persona.

If you have questions about potentially meaningful addenda to your application, consult your college counselor.

Enough Is Enough!

Remember to keep your correspondence with a college at an appropriate level. Use your judgment or ask your counselor to help you determine what “appropriate” might be, in your case. Do not barrage an admissions office with daily letters, phone calls, or e-mail or your name will be uttered with dread. Do make sure that your correspondence is meaningful, memorable, and well presented.

Getting Organized

After each visit, you ought to consider recording your impressions in either a journal or on a checklist. Write down the names of all the people you meet and anecdotes that will help you remember who they are and what they do. What sort of feeling did you get from the school? How was the music department? Was the campus appealing to you? Could you imagine yourself there for four years? Keep in mind that your visit gives you a one-snapshot impression; don't overreact to a poor tour. Keep copies of your correspondence with every school you are considering. The best way to do this is to start a file on each school as you begin your preliminary research and add to it as the process evolves. You never know when you might need to reference a postcard that you sent to a director of admissions! Keep track of everything that you send.

Other tips for campus visits:

- Wear comfortable shoes. Campuses are big.
- Ask in advance if it is possible for you to meet with a financial aid officer.
- Seek out facilities that are of special interest to you but may not be on the tour. You may even find a professor willing to chat with you. Ask for a campus map in the

admissions office.

- Read everything – bulletin boards, posters, flyers.
- Talk to students. This may seem like a daunting prospect, but the information and the sense of the school that you will gain are worth it. Strike up conversations in the dorms or common areas. Be ready with a few questions that are important to you.

CHAPTER IV: WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR?

The Big Picture

You have looked at the colleges. Now you want to know how they will be looking at you. Once again, it is important to see this process from the larger perspective.

The more selective schools to which Hunter students typically apply receive many, many more (sometimes thousands more) applications from qualified students than they can possibly accept. This means that these colleges are denying admission to "acceptable" students, many with high SAT scores and near-perfect grade point averages.

Most admission offices think not in terms of a large applicant "pool," but in terms of many smaller applicant "puddles," all of which have their demanding college constituencies. High grades and test scores mean better statistics in the next issue of U.S. News and World Report, and that makes the President happy. The coaches are looking for good athletes. The band director needs a new clarinet player. The development office is reviewing the applicants for hidden fortunes. The college is looking to increase ethnic diversity. The college is looking for applicants from each and every state in the U.S. Perhaps you are applying to a college one of your parents attended. You will be put into a special pool. The examples of divergence from the "usual" process could go on and on.

Although there are special factors in the process, the following elements in your application are considered at most colleges. Most of these are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

- high school performance (most important)
- high school course selection
- academic rigor of high school and relative performance of students
- scores on standardized tests
- out-of-class activities
- application essay(s)
- recommendations
- interview

Your Transcript

Your transcript is the single most important part of your application to any college. The following information can be found on your transcript:

Where you are attending high school.

The courses you have taken: The curriculum at Hunter is fairly set for your first several years. Everyone takes a similar course load through junior year. Some exceptions would be the students who are taking an advanced mathematics course or an additional language. Colleges do take note of such accelerated schedules.

The courses you are taking in your senior year: The courses you take in your senior year play an important role in your possible admission to certain colleges, especially the more selective ones. A separate section of this handbook discusses senior course selection in more detail.

The grades you have earned: Yes, colleges want students who have done well in high school. As the Director of Admissions at UNC Chapel Hill said, "Performance predicts performance." Colleges do look back to your freshman and sophomore years. Your junior year grades, however, being the most recent, receive a more careful review. When your first semester senior year grades are placed on your transcript and then sent to the colleges to which you are applying, those grades get an even more careful review.

In most cases, the grades you have earned and the courses you have taken will determine the schools to which you have a reasonable chance of admission. You can see what kind of student you have been by reviewing your grades just like an admission officer can.

Are you an average student, a poor student, an exceptional student? Late bloomers are not necessarily doomed. Admission offices notice trends, both up and down. Have your grades been getting better with each semester? Did you have a bad first semester sophomore year? Why? Are you stronger in the sciences and math than in the humanities? These are questions you should certainly think about addressing in your essay or during an interview. Unless you have applied early somewhere, colleges do not see your quarter grades or your exam grades, unless you request to have your first quarter senior year grades sent.

Hunter's Profile: Many of the college admission offices will be familiar with HCHS.

They will be reviewing your performance relative to your classmates and looking at your course load relative to the courses available. Even if the person reviewing your application is not familiar with the school, however, Hunter provides an instrument which will enable such an objective evaluation.

Like most high schools, Hunter compiles a profile, and a copy of it is sent with every transcript that is mailed to a college admission office. Hunter's profile includes: a brief history of the school, accreditation information, general information on the students and faculty, information on admission to Hunter, a brief description of sports and activities available, a summary of our academic procedures, grading scale and program of study, a description of our curriculum, a summary of our course offerings by department, a distribution chart of SAT I scores, a chart displaying the mean grade earned by course for junior year courses, and a listing of the colleges acceptances for Hunter for the past academic year.

The profile explains Hunter's ranking policy. Hunter does not rank its students, and the colleges use other information in the profile to help them judge you relative to your peers.

If you are ever asked about your rank in class, it is appropriate to say that your school does not rank.

Senior Course Selection

In your senior year you have the greatest flexibility in selecting your courses, and the college admission offices will be paying attention to your choices. Specifically, you are able to choose from courses of relatively greater or lesser academic challenge. The colleges like to see students who challenge themselves academically. They like to see that you are taking advantage of all that your school has to offer.

The rule of thumb is this: challenge yourself as much as you can given the courses that Hunter has to offer; take senior year courses that are appropriate to your academic record, abilities and interest. Challenge but do not overwhelm yourself!

You will select your senior year courses in the second semester of your junior year.

When the time comes, discuss your possibilities with your parents, faculty advisor and counselors.

Standardized Tests

Most colleges and universities require their applicants to take at least one standardized test for their consideration for admission. For you, this usually means taking the SAT I: Reasoning Test (formerly called the SAT). Most selective colleges also require one, two, or even three SAT II: Subject Tests (formerly called Achievement Tests). In recent years, most colleges have been accepting the ACT in place of the SAT I, and sometimes in place of both SAT I and SAT II. Most students should consider taking the ACT at least once; by doing so, you could be giving yourself more options.

Whatever standardized test(s) you take, remember that Hunter does not send scores to colleges; scores do not appear on your transcript. You are responsible for seeing to it that the respective testing agency forwards your score(s), in a timely fashion, to the colleges to which you will apply. You are also responsible for registering yourself for each of the standardized tests you take.

NOTE: Some colleges have reduced or eliminated the use of the SAT in the admissions process. For a full list, go to: www.fairtest.org

SAT

Registration materials for the SAT are available at **www.collegeboard.com**. You are responsible for submitting your registration form on time and with the appropriate fees.

It is important that you register for each test you take from the College Board in the same way. Always use the same first, middle and last names, birth date, social security number, etc., or your scores could be delayed or lost. When registering, you need not complete the Student Descriptive Questionnaire, but about 90% of test-takers do. The questionnaire asks you to provide information about your background, your school courses, your grades, your activities, and your college plans. The information is sent to the schools to which you are reporting your scores, along with your scores.

When you register for the SAT, you may select up to four colleges, universities, scholarship programs (ROTC), or other programs to which your scores will be sent. If

you want to send your scores to more than four recipients, you can do so in several ways by paying an additional fee. Since you will probably take the SAT again in your senior year, it is not necessary to be final about your reporting plans when you register for the test in your junior year. In fact, it is wise for some students not to have their first SAT scores sent to any college. **The school code, or CEEB code, for Hunter, is 333705.**

The College Board has returned to the “score choice” option. Students are able to choose which scores and test administrations to send to colleges. Some colleges have made some noise about this and may still require a full “score report” as they have in past years. The best thing to do would be to be prepared for every test you take. Taking the test twice is the common practice; to take it more than two times is excessive and unnecessary. While some colleges consider your highest total score as your best, most colleges will use your highest scores as a composite, even if they were earned at two different sittings. Sometimes the military academies and a few other schools will take an average of your scores; still other schools will use only your most recent scores.

SAT Preparation

As is the case with any test, especially with an important test such as the SAT, it is important that you prepare for the SAT before taking it. The best type of preparation you can do for the SAT is to become familiar with the test. Taking practice tests before you actually take the SAT is an excellent way to prepare for the exam. Books of practice tests are published and are available at most book stores.

Preparation usually means something different to each person taking the SAT. For many HCHS students, and indeed, for a large number of the college-bound seniors in this area, preparation means taking a coaching course. Study carefully the claims made by SAT coaching companies in their advertisements. Remember that on average, all SAT scores increase on the second administration. There are countless claims and countless reports regarding coaching and SAT preparation. Before you decide on taking a course, ask some of these questions: How much time do you have to devote to this course? How much work will be required outside of class? Are you disciplined enough to prepare for the exam on your own?

However you decide to prepare, remember that what will be most important will be the time you devote to preparation and the attitude with which you approach the test.

Remember that there is no course or any individual with a "secret" to success on the SAT.

SAT Subject Tests

The Subject Tests are administered by the College Board and are usually given on the same days as the SAT I. The tests are designed to measure your knowledge or skill in a particular subject area and to apply that knowledge or skill. The tests are curriculum-based, so it is much easier to study for them than it is for the SAT. Many of the more selective colleges require their applicants to take one or two Subject Tests. A few colleges require three Subject Tests and a few colleges even specify the tests you must take.

Tests are offered in: Literature, Mathematics Levels I and II, Biology (General), Biology E/M, Chemistry, Physics, American History and Social Studies, World History, French Reading, French Listening, Spanish Reading, Spanish Listening, German Reading, German Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Chinese Listening, Japanese Listening, Korean Listening, and English Proficiency. It is good to take SAT II subject tests in two or three different subject areas to show your strengths across various academic disciplines.

There are a lot of factors to consider when making decisions regarding which SAT II subject tests to take and when to take them. Your decisions should be based on your academic strengths and the timing of the courses you will take that can best prepare you for your tests. It is recommended that students take SAT II subject tests in subjects that they have taken advanced level courses offered at Hunter (with a few exceptions), and the spring of the 11th grade year is when most students take the majority of their SAT and SAT II subject tests.

SAT and SAT II subject tests taken near the time when you apply to college are valued most. Some college admission officers say that they view SAT scores from 9th and 10th grades with the understanding that they might not accurately reflect a student's abilities by the time they get to 11th or 12th grade. Keep in mind that it does not impress colleges to see that you took SAT II subject tests every year from 9th – 12th grade. Colleges really just want to see your best 2-3 scores, not an array of 4-5 scores that vary widely.

Remember that while score choice exists, it is possible that some schools may not “allow” you to use it. Meaning, that when you send your score report from the College Board to colleges you are applying to in the fall of 12th grade, they will (potentially) see every SAT and SAT II Subject Test you have ever taken (they will not see PSAT scores).

AP test scores are not directly used in the college admissions process and are usually not requested on college applications. The main purpose of AP scores is to help students take advanced courses once they arrive at college (please see your counselor or collegeboard.com for more information).

The language tests should be considered by students who have studied at least three years of that language. Good study books for all of the tests are available in bookstores. Some students may choose to take SAT II Subject tests in subjects as soon as they feel they are ready for them, which might be in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade. Before you decide to take an SAT II Subject test, you should do the following things. Take several full-length timed practice tests. Check collegeboard.com for information about how to find out if you are ready. Discuss your readiness with your teacher and counselor. Take the SAT II at the latest test date in the school year so that you have the most classroom preparation.

Scores for the Subject Tests are similar to those on the sections of the SAT, on a scale of 200 to 800. Some colleges use the scores as a part of the admission criteria; others claim they use them more for placement purposes for students who have been accepted. The tests you decide to take, when you take them, and the scores you receive can be very

important factors in the admission formulas of the schools that require them.

You must check the Subject Test requirements for each of the colleges to which you are applying. Registration for the Subject Tests is the same as that for the SAT. You may take up to three tests at one administration.

ACT

The ACT, administered by the American College Testing Program, is an alternative college admission test more commonly used in the Midwest, parts of the South and the West, but with increased frequency on the East coast. Because the ACT is curriculum-based, some students tend to score a little higher on it. One recent, unscientific study found that about one third of test-takers scored relatively higher on the SAT scale, one third higher on the ACT scale, and for one-third, the scores were roughly the same.

Untimed and Extended Time Standardized Tests

Each of the standardized tests described in this section can be taken with extended time by students with documented learning disabilities or other handicaps. Information on these testing conditions is available from the HCHS Learning Specialist. Students with identified learning difficulties and special needs who request special testing and proctoring arrangements must meet the following conditions: A recent (within three years) psychological/educational evaluation must be on file with the high school learning specialist and presented no less than six weeks prior to request for special testing accommodations. The guidelines for documentation are very specific, and it is the student's responsibility to provide that documentation to the learning specialist. Students should have a conversation with their counselors and learning specialist as early as possible to decide an appropriate course of action.

A Final Word on Testing

How important are your test scores? That depends on where you are applying. College guidebooks and admission materials often indicate an average score for students. Keep in mind that this is an average, not a minimum. More schools have moved to the reporting of their scores as ranges for the middle 50% of their students. This information is usually more helpful and a lot less intimidating. If your test scores are within the college's range, their relative importance, when compared to other parts of your application, decreases.

College admission officers are fully aware that some students do not "test well." Slow reading speed, unfamiliarity with the test format, or simple fear may cause a student to perform poorly on standardized tests. For these reasons, test scores are usually reviewed in the context of all other parts of the student's application. **As one admission officer said, "We are much more interested in what the student has done in three and a half years than we are in what he has done in three and a half hours on a Saturday morning."**

Points to Remember About Standardized Tests

- Check each college's test requirements. What is that last date for which the college will accept scores?

- Allow three to four weeks for colleges to receive your scores after the exam date.
- It is your responsibility to forward your test scores to colleges.
- You cannot take both the SAT I and the SAT II on the same day.
- Not all SAT II Subject Tests are offered on all test dates.
- If you are applying under an early notification plan (Early Decision or Early Action), you will need to have completed all your testing by the end of October of your senior year. Although you may take the November tests and have them “rushed,” colleges may not see them before they make a decision about your application.
- You are responsible for registering for all standardized tests. Fee waivers are available in the Counseling office for students who meet the guidelines for eligibility as determined by the College Board.
- The school code, or CEEB code, for Hunter, is 333705.

CHAPTER V: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Final List

In the fall of your senior year, you will finalize your list of schools and complete your applications. After working through the processes previously outlined in this handbook – self-evaluation, research, and campus visits – you will come up with a list of schools to which you want to apply. Your final list should include about 10 schools, a mix of public and private choices, any of which you would be happy to attend. You may also decide to focus on a single school (see below, Early Decision and Early Action).

For most students the final list of schools includes three types:

- "Reach" schools – colleges you would like to attend but for which you do not quite "fit" the profile of a typically accepted student, or for which you "fit" but the school is so selective that it turns away many "qualified" applicants;
- "Possible" schools, where your chance of acceptance is more reasonable in that you "have what they are looking for" or exceed the averages, but where a good number of qualified students are not accepted;
- "Likely" schools where your chance of getting admitted is very likely: you fit the profile and most qualified applicants are accepted ("safer" schools).

Keep in mind that there is no such thing as a guarantee or a sure-shot acceptance for anyone. Also, you should not apply to a "reach" school that is too much of a reach if the academic environment you would face there would be overwhelming or burdensome.

And be sure that every school to which you apply meets YOUR criteria. You should not go through all of the work of applying to a school just to see if you can get accepted, or to find out how many colleges will accept you, if you have no intention of attending. You can only attend one college!

Completing an Application

Plan ahead! It can take an application package several weeks to reach you once you have requested it. Applications can also be downloaded from college websites.

The application forms used by colleges and universities vary a great deal. Some ask for little more than basic biographical and academic information on one side of a piece of paper while others can be several pages long. Regardless of the form it takes, the application is the primary tool the admission offices use to collect information from you.

The questions asked and the credentials required tell you a lot about the school, and the answers you provide tell the school a lot about you.

Completing applications takes time, a lot of time if you are going to do a good job. You should know that even the mechanics of the completion of the application form is a significant "sorter" for the admission office. A sloppy, incomplete or late application sends a very clear message to the college, whether that was your intention or not. The college will favor the applicants who have taken time with their application, followed directions, and presented themselves in the best possible manner.

You should answer all of the questions asked on the applications honestly and forthrightly. **The application is not a place for you to be modest.** List your accomplishments and activities as requested. Some students find that attaching an easy-to-read résumé is easier than trying to make your information fit within certain boxes or on lines. If you attach anything additional to your application, however, be certain that you have followed the instructions on that application very carefully. Some schools will not accept attachments! The basic information from most applications is transferred into a computer file when it is received, and not having the necessary information in the appropriate place at the time of entry into the program could be detrimental. Avoid the temptation to "over-word process."

In the past couple of years, computerized and on-line applications have made the mechanics of applying much easier and neater. You will find applications which can be started and/or completed on-line on the Web sites of many colleges and universities. Be careful: you should not have to pay any company a fee over the college's usual application fee.

Have your completed application proofread and be certain that it is neat and clean. Do not rely on mom or dad, or mom's or dad's secretary to do your typing. A "sanitized" application or essay could actually work against you. Before mailing any application, you should make a copy of it to keep for your records.

Many colleges have a two-part application process. These schools ask you to first submit some basic information along with the application fee and then send you the longer second application. Some state university systems, such as those in California and New York, centralize their application processes. One application is completed and mailed to a central office, along with the appropriate fees for the campus(es) to which you are applying. The central office then distributes your application to the campuses you specify.

Other Support Materials

Should you send extra materials along with your applications? In some cases it is suggested, or even required. For example, it is not uncommon for athletes to send videotapes of their play. Talented artists usually submit portfolios of their work, especially when applying to art programs. When supplemental material is required or recommended, this will be mentioned in the application literature. If not requested, should you still send extras? It depends on whether or not your extra material will add something significant to your application. Does it present you in an exceptional way? Keep in mind the amount of material received by college admission offices. Some colleges will not accept supplemental material because of this flood of paper. If you have something you would like to send with your applications, speak your college counselor first.

The Common Application

In an effort to simplify the process for prospective applicants, many private colleges and universities agree to work together to develop, distribute, and accept a generic application form. The form is called the Common Application, and it can be downloaded at www.commonapp.org. Once you have completed the Common Application, you may send it to as many of the participating institutions as you wish either electronically or by mail. Of course, the appropriate application fees must be sent along with each copy of the Common Application. Some schools that accept the Common Application require you to provide supplemental information, and this is usually outlined on a second form which you can find on the Common Application website. The www.commonapp.org site provides a list of what each specific institution accepting the Common Application requires, including supplements and fees.

Many students wonder whether or not the use of the Common Application will indicate to the college a lack of interest on the part of the student. If the student were interested in that school, wouldn't he request and use the school's own application form? In fact, each school participating in the Common Application group has agreed not to view the Common Application any differently than they would their own application. Many of the schools' own applications are actually Common Applications with that school's name imprinted on the forms.

Application Deadlines and Related Terms

It is critical that you know the application deadlines for the schools to which you are applying. To apply late usually elicits the same response as not applying at all. Below are some important terms used in the application and admission process by most colleges and universities. It is important that you understand them and the differences between them.

Application Deadline: In the application literature for each college you will find a date by which all application materials are due. In some cases, the date will be a postmark date, and in others it will be a date by which all materials must be received. If this is not specified, you should assume that all materials must be received by the date indicated.

Candidate (or Applicant) Notification Date: This is the date by which you will receive a decision, or the date by which the decisions will be mailed from the school. Notification dates for the more competitive schools are usually in late March and early April. Most colleges will not provide acceptance information by phone. Be patient!

Rolling Admissions: Some schools will review your application as soon as all supporting materials have been received. You will usually receive your decision within six weeks of the receipt of your application materials by the admission office. When a school has a Rolling Admission policy, there may not be a set application deadline; rather, applications are usually accepted within a certain time period (October through March, for example) as long as there are spaces in the freshman class. At some of the more selective colleges with rolling admissions (for example, public universities in the Midwest), it is advisable that you apply by October or November of your senior year. At

some institutions with rolling admissions, Honors Programs and/or scholarship competitions may have earlier deadlines (the University of Maryland is an example).

Candidate's Reply Date: The date of May 1 has been accepted by most colleges and universities in the United States as the date by which all admitted students must inform the school they are planning on attending of their intention to enroll. A non-refundable deposit is usually due by this date. Submitting your reply or deposit after May 1 will jeopardize your acceptance and place in the freshman class. In addition to notifying the school you will attend of your intentions, you are also obligated to notify all other schools to which you have been accepted of your plans not to attend. Sending a deposit to more than one college is not ethical and will jeopardize your acceptances at each of the schools involved. If a school asks you to reply or submit a non-refundable deposit before May 1, you should speak with your college counselor.

The application process for the U.S. Military Academies begins in the spring of your junior year. The application process for the academies is a two-tiered process: you apply to the academies in which you are interested and at the same time apply for the required nominations from Members of Congress or other officials.

Applying Early

Many students like the idea of applying to colleges early, having the process completed by December vacation, and relaxing during the second semester. Applying early might, in fact, be a good idea for some students, but always discuss your options with your college counselor. Below is an explanation of some of the terms used to describe the various ways of applying early:

Early Decision: Several schools offer an admission plan for those students who are certain of their college choice during the first semester of their senior year. Application deadlines for early decision I plans are usually in November. A few colleges offer early decision II with application deadlines falling at the end of December or early January. A student who applies to a school under an early decision plan must sign a contract (as do his/her parents and college counselor) which states that the student will attend that school if accepted. He/She also states that he/she will withdraw any and all other applications submitted to other schools and that he/she will not submit any others. Applying to a school early decision is a serious and binding commitment. HCHS will not violate an Early Decision commitment.

Students applying early are reviewed primarily on the basis of their performance through junior year, so the early decision option is usually advisable only for students with very good academic records. Responses for early decision applicants are usually received before the winter holiday vacation of the senior year, and they may be acceptance, denial or deferral to the regular spring applicant pool. A student may apply to only one school as an early decision candidate, and he/she should be sure that that is the school he/she would like to attend. If you are interested in applying as an early decision applicant, it is important to discuss all of the considerations with your counselor soon after senior year begins.

Early Action: This is a decision plan similar to that described above, but the important difference is that your acceptance is not binding. Most early action deadlines are in November and December, and you will usually receive a decision before December break. You will have until the May 1 Candidate's Reply Date, however, to decide whether or not you will attend that school. You may still apply to other schools even if accepted under this plan. Decisions under this plan are made primarily on the basis of your performance through junior year. It is usually more difficult to get accepted under an early action plan than it is through the regular admission process in the spring.

Single Choice Early Action or Restrictive Early Action: Some schools that have “restrictive early action” programs do not allow candidates to apply to other schools during the early-action period. However, once candidates receive Early Action decisions (mid-December), they are free to apply elsewhere, if they so choose.

Extracurricular Activities

Many times in this handbook, you will read that your academic record will be the single most important determining factor in your admission decisions. However, your grades and test scores do not reflect everything about you. Your involvement in out-of-class activities might reveal special talents, such as unusual scientific or technical skills, musical ability, journalistic competence, or artistic talents. Your problem-solving skills, organizational abilities, leadership skills and maturity are often demonstrated through your involvement in activities. Drive and initiative, entrepreneurial ability, and dedication to some service activity above and beyond what is required are all attractive to the admission office.

Selective colleges look for students who will bring something special to their campuses.

What are you going to contribute to that community? Chances are that if you were involved in activities in high school, you will continue to be involved in college.

Remember, however, that the colleges will not be impressed by a long laundry list of activities and club memberships. Rather, they are impressed by some of the qualities described above, such as dedication and commitment, accomplishment and recognition, and movement into positions of leadership and increased responsibility. What do your activities-- in school and out-- say about you?

Document what you do. Good ways to do this:

- Annual list of activities.
- Log of what you have learned from your activities.
- Bring actual project, paper, award, etc. to place in folder.
- Service activities show commitment—that you are socially attuned and responsible. And complete your required service credit by the end of your junior year, if not earlier!

The Essay

The application essay is probably the most dreaded part of the application for the student. Most selective schools require at least one, and sometimes several, essays.

Imagine all of the parts of your application on a table before an admission officer: your application, your transcript, your test scores, your recommendations. Think of your essay as being that part of your application which transforms your file from a collection of bits of information into a real person. If one of the essay questions is, "Provide us with any other additional information which might be helpful in evaluating your application," then do just that. As the Dean of Admission at William and Mary said, "The essay is the student's chance to make his application come alive." Especially at smaller and medium sized schools, the student who uses the essay to present a lively, honest, and self-motivated image is improving his/her chances for admission.

Above all else, admission offices are looking for honesty, openness, directness and sincerity in your essays. You should not feel that you have to come up with something unusual or tragic. You should not try to give the reader what you think he or she wants. You should not use language with which you are not usually comfortable.

What should you do when writing your essays? Make sure you understand the question you are answering and answer it. Do not give one school the answer to an essay for another school unless the questions are exactly the same. Give yourself ample time to write good essays. Write a first draft and then put it away for a couple of days. Take it out and revise it. Put it away again. Polish it and then have your college counselor read it, for both content and grammatical and spelling errors. A sloppily written essay is an easy death for any applicant. Remember your audience and be sure to show, not just tell. Remember that longer does not necessarily mean better. If you are asked to keep your response within a certain space, do not exceed that space.

Be careful about getting too much help on your essays. It will show and it will spell doom if the reader gets the impression that the work is not your own. Someone who reads hundreds (or thousands) of them will be able to tell. Write your own essays!

If you are interested, the Counseling Office has handouts which discuss application essays in more detail. Many of them include sample essays, but be careful not to lose your originality. Be YOURSELF, and leave yourself plenty of time to do a good job.

Some considerations in writing your essay:

- Leave yourself time -- for thinking, for note taking, for mapping ideas, for rewriting.
- Be clear and direct. Your essay might only be read very quickly one time. You don't want the reader to have to work to understand what you are trying to say in your essay. Ask yourself, "What does the reader learn about me from this essay?"
- Write about something money can't buy: Feelings, ideas, reflections, reactions.
- Keep a journal of some of your responses to the experiences you have and use these jottings later to give you ideas for essays.
- Do some reading about writing essays: *Bird-by-Bird* by Anne LaMotte is funny, easy to

read and inspirational. Also good: *If You Want to Write* by Brenda Uland.

- Trust your words, what you write from inside.

The Interview

The interview is probably the time in the application process when the student experiences the most anxiety. There is a big difference between dropping an essay in the mail and sitting five feet from someone looking at you in the face. Being nervous is expected and understandable, but the truth is, there is little to be nervous about. It would take a lot of work to "blow" an interview completely. Unless you are very shy and uncomfortable, they almost always will work in your favor. Any personal contact you have with a representative from the admission office strengthens your application and makes it more "real." Take advantage of your interviews and get one whenever you can. There are several different types of interviews:

Alumni Interviews: Many colleges, so overwhelmed by the numbers of applicants in recent years, have stopped offering interviews by members of their admission staffs.

Instead, the schools farm out their interviews to trained alumni who live in our area. For some colleges, this is a required part of the application process and for others it is an option. The alumnus will usually contact you a couple of weeks after your application is received by the admission office. Meetings often take place at local coffee shops or other public places. Approach these interviews as conversations. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the school. If you can manage to keep the control of the conversation (not in a forceful way), then you leave yourself less open to feeling out of control. Some interviewers will have a list of questions which they are expected to ask.

Whether they say the interview will "count" or not, you can be sure that your interviewer will send a report back to the school and that this report will become a part of your application file. Most alumni interviews are informational and not evaluative.

Group Interviews: Many colleges, in conjunction with their campus tour, offer group interviews for many prospective students at one time. This is designed to be more of an information session and carries little evaluative weight. At the same time, however, it would be easy to make a good or a bad impression depending on the questions you might ask, your appearance, and other factors.

On-campus Personal Interviews: If it is possible, getting a personal interview with an admission officer is the most desired type of interview. These are conducted in the admission office and usually take about 45 minutes. While the interview is chance for you to learn more about the school through hearing about it and asking questions, the primary purpose of this type of interview is evaluative. Even so, if the interview develops into a relaxed conversation, this is usually a good sign. Remember that it is all right to politely express a difference of opinion or to say that you do not know something if you do not. These interviews are usually evaluative.

The Counseling Office has additional information regarding the college interview, and we will be happy to simulate an interview experience for you.

For any type of interview, you should keep the following points in mind:

- Schedule your interview well enough in advance if you are seeking one at the school.
- Do your homework before the interview. Review the school's literature and know the basics about the institution.
- Arrive at least fifteen minutes before your scheduled interview time so that you are not rushed or late.
- Do not take your parents with you into the actual interview. If they have accompanied you, they should wait elsewhere. If they have questions, and it is fine if they do, they should ask them after the interview has concluded.
- Dress neatly and cleanly. If in doubt, dress conservatively. Do not try to overly impress with your appearance.
- Do not bring "stuff" with you to the interview. This is a chance to talk.
- During the interview, be honest; be YOURSELF. Listen and take time to reflect
- Try to be energetic and enthusiastic. Make eye contact and use a firm handshake.
- Know the name of the person who interviewed you and send a brief thank-you note within a few days of your interview.
- Express yourself well and clearly and demonstrate self-confidence and maturity.

The Secondary School Report/Counselor Recommendation

With each transcript and secondary school report sent to a college, your college counselor will also send a letter of recommendation on your behalf. Be certain that you have taken enough time to talk with your counselor long before you have application materials due so she can write a specific, comprehensive, and informed letter about your academic and extracurricular history at HCHS. Be sure that you have completed all questionnaires requested by the Counseling Department and have plenty of material in your Counseling Folder (praise sheets, documentation of activities, etc.) to help in this process. Your counselor needs to have a good sense of your achievements, however insignificant they may seem to you. Also be sure that your counselor is aware of any extenuating circumstances that may have compromised your academic performance at HCHS.

The late fall gets very busy in the Counseling Office, with ten to twelve applications for each senior being processed in two months' time. While you must be attentive to the application deadlines of the schools to which you are applying, you must also be aware of the internal deadlines set by the office, since those occur earlier than those of the colleges. Determine your earliest application deadline and observe the office deadlines to be sure your application materials are sent and reach the colleges on time.

Teacher Recommendations

Many colleges will ask that you have a teacher write a letter of recommendation on your behalf. Some ask for more than one teacher recommendation, and some even specify teachers of specific subjects. You should give careful consideration to your selection of the teachers you will ask to write letters for you. The teachers you choose should know you well. Teachers from junior and senior year are usually preferred, as are teachers of "core" academic subjects like math, English, history, and science. If you indicate a

particular major or field of interest on your application, you should have letters which support that interest. For example, if you are interested in studying engineering, the college will look for a letter from a science or math teacher. Choose teachers from different disciplines: colleges want to know that you have more than one academic strength. Ask for recommendations from teachers in whose classes you have done well and who know you. You should NOT mix and match teachers with your different colleges—**choose only two teachers and have them write for each of your schools.**

****NOTE:** During your junior year, start thinking about which teachers you will ask to write your recommendations. If you are considering an early application, ask them before school ends in June.

Once you have selected your teachers, you must ask them *in person*, not via a note in a mailbox, if they will write letters for you. Remember that HCHS teachers take this responsibility very seriously, and that they spend a considerable amount of time and effort preparing thoughtful and well-written recommendations for their students. You must give your teachers ample time to accomplish this task. Ask your teachers in May or June or very early in the fall semester so that they have plenty of time to think about what they will say. If the teacher agrees to write a letter for you, you should offer to meet with him or her to answer any questions.

Be organized. Give the teacher the forms with deadlines highlighted or clearly noted by you, along with stamped envelopes addressed to the colleges. More information on the procedure will be provided in the fall. Most schools also ask that the teacher also complete a teacher evaluation form. Before you give it to the teacher, be certain that you have provided all the necessary information requested at the top of the form, including your signature.

Never ask a teacher to write a recommendation for you when there is not ample time to do so properly. After all of your letters have been written, thank the teachers who have written for you. When you get responses from the schools in the spring, let the teachers who have written for you know what the decisions are.

To waive or not to waive:

The Buckley Amendment (The Family Rights and Privacy Act) was passed in 1974 and allows you access to your application file and academic records once you have enrolled as a student at a particular school. Many recommendation forms will include a statement to the effect that you understand your right to view such information. You are then usually given the right to waive your right to access to the information on the form you are signing.

You should be aware of several points regarding your waiving your right to review your recommendations. The first is that they can be viewed only at the school you actually attend. Second, most schools retain in the student files only the student's application and the high school transcript, with all recommendations being discarded. An argument for signing the waiver is that the person who is writing for you will feel more freedom to

write honestly and openly about you with the knowledge that you will not be reading the recommendation later. Some say that if you do not sign the waiver, you might be sending a message to the college that you have something to hide, or that you are concerned about something the teacher might say about you. No one knows for sure what effect your signing or not has on the person reading your application-- it is supposed to have no effect. We recommend that you do waive your right to access to the recommendation, but in doing so you are giving up a right to which you are entitled. In light of this, the transcript release form which must be signed by you and your parents includes a waiver of access to information submitted to a college by the College Counseling Office on your behalf, and the colleges are informed of your having waived your access.

Additional Recommendations

Many students ask about whether or not they should get extra letters of recommendation to support their application to a particular school. Such letters might be from alumni of that college or friends of the family in prominent positions. The rule of thumb is this: letters from people who do not know you well as a person, and specifically, as a student, are not helpful. In fact, letters from the President of a country, a bishop, wealthy business people, and so on, sometimes put off the people reading the application and could work against you.

If you think an additional letter or two might be helpful to your application in discussing some talent that is not documented in your academic recommendations, you might think of asking a coach, an employer, or an advisor. Do not include more than one or two, however. Discuss all additional letters with your college counselor prior to sending.

College Admissions Budget

The college process itself can be expensive even before you get to college! The following is a list of expenses that you can expect to incur. If these fees are unmanageable for your family, see your counselor to discuss fee waivers and other ways to cope with the costs.

Postage: Some teachers require their recommendations letter to be mailed to colleges. In this case, you should provide them with stamped and addressed envelopes to the undergraduate admissions offices of your colleges. Hunter College High School's address should be the default return address for any school forms. Finally, some students wish to include papers, projects, supplemental letters of recommendation or a portfolio of their work. These, too, may be mailed.

College visits: College visits are expected. Not only can these visits be critical factors in solidifying your decisions about a particular school, they let the college know how interested you are in them. We also suggest that family vacations this year include side trips to some of the colleges in which you have expressed interest and, if you can, carpool with friends. It can be more fun with a friend along and it cuts cost for both of you.

Costs include: Transportation (car, train, bus, airplane)
 Meals
 Overnight stay

A college housing office can help with accommodations, as can Hunter alumni who currently attend the school. Some schools offer organized visits, which are fully funded, often for underrepresented groups of students.

AP (Advanced Placement) Exams: This is not a cost directly related to college applications, but it is often a cost that you will incur within your last two years of high school. Fee waivers are available from the Assistant Principal.

Fee Waiver Guidelines: The SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service is designed to help students for whom test fees represent obstacles on the road to college. High school juniors and seniors who cannot afford to pay the test fees can request fee waivers through the Counseling Department. The waivers cover the basic test fees for SAT or Subject Tests, as well as either the Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) or the Student Answer Service (SAS). A fee waiver may qualify you for application fee waivers at many colleges. If you are eligible, the Counseling Department will give you a fee waiver card to mail in with your completed Registration Form (or to use as instructed to register online).

Fee Waivers: For families who meet certain financial guidelines, testing and college application fees can be waived. (Note: You must take the SAT I/SAT II with a fee waiver to qualify for college application fee waivers).

College Application Fees: These fees vary in price and can be as high as \$100 per application. Students who use SAT fee waivers are eligible to receive up to four Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms. These forms notify participating colleges that you have participated in the SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service and request that colleges waive their application fees.

CHAPTER VI: FINANCIAL AID

With the total costs of many private colleges now exceeding \$45,000 per year, financial aid is a topic on the minds of an increasing number of people. Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind regarding financial aid is this: You will not know whether or not you qualify for assistance, and you will not receive any aid, if you do not apply. It is not uncommon for more than half of the students at some very well-known schools to be receiving some type of financial assistance.

There are basically two different types of financial assistance offered by colleges and universities: need-based and merit-based.

Need-Based Assistance

Every school will require that you submit the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** in order to be considered for aid. The FAFSA is available online for preview at the end of November but cannot be submitted until after January 1. Many schools will also ask you to complete the CSS Profile (also known as the Financial Aid Profile), a second form available in the early fall and with which you must send a processing fee.

Both forms are submitted to processors who then calculate your expected family contribution and forward that information to you and to any schools to which you have asked the information be sent. The FAFSA calculations are based on federally legislated methodology. The CSS/Financial Aid Profile calculations take additional discretionary information into account, as requested by the various schools to which you are applying.

Some colleges ask that applicants for financial aid submit the school's own financial aid form directly to the school, in addition to the FAFSA, and sometimes the CSS/Financial Aid Profile as well. If this is the case for a school to which you are applying, be attentive to deadlines and provide complete information. There are four possible combinations of forms required for financial assistance: Some colleges will want only the FAFSA, some will want the FAFSA, CSS/Financial Aid Profile, and an institutional form, others will want the FAFSA and an institutional form, and still others will want the FAFSA and CSS/Financial Aid Profile. When applying for any type of financial aid, it is important to be accurate and prompt in filing all of your forms.

The Financial Aid Office at each institution will take the information provided by the form processor and put together a financial aid "package" which might be some combination of **grant, scholarship, loan, and/or work-study**. Unfortunately, an increasing number of colleges are not able meet 100% of the demonstrated need of their applicants. That means there might be a "gap" between what you can afford and what the college can provide to assist you.

Grants and scholarships are monies given to you by the college which do not have to be repaid. The **Pell Grant** is the largest of the federal grant programs. Determination is made on the basis of information provided by review of your FAFSA. The **Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)** is another federal program

(administered by the colleges) for students with exceptional need.

Loans must be repaid and have different terms. **The Stafford Student Loan** is a federal program (administered by private lenders) based on need. The loan is interest-free while the student is in college and until repayment begins. The federal government pays interest while you are still in school and for six months afterwards. The repayment period is five to ten years, and there is a 5% origination fee subtracted from the loan. **Perkins Loans** are federally funded and are offered by the colleges. They are based on need. The interest rate is 5% for the first four years and 8% for the last six years of the repayment period. Interest is not paid while you are a student and for nine months after graduation. **Unsubsidized Stafford Loans** are designed for students who do not demonstrate need. The terms are the same as for the Stafford Loan described above, except that interest must be paid while the student is in college. Repayment of principle begins upon graduation. **PLUS (Parents Loans to Undergraduate Students) and SLS (Supplemental Loan to Students) Loans** are also not based on financial need, but you usually must first apply for Pell and Stafford Loans before being considered. Both have yearly maximums. Interest rates are tied to the 52-week T-bill rate. Interest accumulates while you are a student, but payment can be deferred until after graduation. The repayment periods are five to ten years.

College Work Study is employment which you must take while in school, earning a salary which you are expected to contribute toward your expenses. The program is administered by the colleges, and the financial aid or work study office will help you find a job which qualifies. Most work study jobs are part-time and clerical in nature.

Merit-Based Assistance

A growing number of colleges and universities are making available scholarship money which is awarded not on the basis of need, but for some outstanding quality or accomplishment demonstrated by the student. The only way to learn of these awards is to seek them out: Check the literature you receive from the schools to which you are applying and do a search on the web. Whenever such information is received by the Counseling Office, it is posted on the bulletin board outside the faculty lounge.

Many privately-funded scholarships are also awarded each year, from businesses, associations, civic groups, corporations, and others. As information on these awards is received by the Counseling Office, it is posted on Naviance.

BEWARE! Of individuals and firms who claim to be able to uncover hidden riches available for you to use for college. There are extensive, FREE, scholarship searches available on the World Wide Web. Check these web pages for a lot of free information on financial aid and free scholarships searches: www.finaid.org and www.fastweb.com

CHAPTER VII: STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL TALENTS

ATHLETES

A student who excels in sports may wish to consider capitalizing on that talent in his or her college search. In that case, the first and most important task is to make a decision about the level of commitment he/she would like to make to athletics in college. Many sports in college are year-round commitments. Depending on the school, the coach, and/or the sport, much of the student-athlete's time in college will not be his/her own. It is important to talk with student-athletes already in college as you decide for yourself what role you would like athletics to play in your college search and, subsequently, in your life as a college student.

The next step in pursuing your field of dreams is to make a realistic assessment of your athletic talent. This must usually be done with the guidance and input of your coach at Hunter or outside of the school. Are you a player, who will be of interest to college coaches? At what level? At what schools?

The NCAA and the Clearinghouse

Most colleges and universities belong to the NCAA, and there are divisions of schools within the NCAA. Division I institutions are the larger sports powerhouses. Division I schools usually recruit student-athletes in more than one sport and they offer athletic scholarships. Division II institutions also recruit and offer scholarship money, but not nearly as much as at Division I schools. Division III institutions may or may not recruit actively and they do not offer athletic scholarships. Note that some Division I schools, as a matter of institutional or league policy, do not offer scholarship money: the Ivy League and some Patriot League schools are examples.

The NCAA has established regulations that determine whether or not a student-athlete is eligible to play college athletics, and these regulations differ according to Division.

Students interested in playing at a Division I or Division II School should register with the NCAA Clearinghouse in the spring of the junior year. The Clearinghouse is a large and frustrating bureaucracy, and many student-athletes experience problems and delays in their certification process. Start early to avoid a panic. The student-athlete must be registered and qualified before he/she can play in college.

The Counseling Office can help the student-athlete to navigate the NCAA. The office also provides potential student-athletes with the NCAA rules and regulations related to recruiting. The student-athlete and his/her parents should become familiar with these rules, as a violation would make the student-athlete ineligible to play at any NCAA member institution.

Presenting Yourself

The student-athlete must actively pursue those institutions/programs/coaches in which he/she is interested. It would be a good idea to have some type of sports "résumé " to distribute to coaches. The résumé should include athletic and academic information

presented in an easy-to-read format. Many student-athletes, depending on the sport, also prepare highlight videos. College coaches say they find these helpful, but they should not be more than five to ten minutes in length.

The Courting Process

Depending on how interested coaches are in having you join them, senior year can be a time of excitement and confusion. The student-athlete must become familiar with the rules regarding campus visits, but at the same time, he/she must be certain to speak with student-athletes already playing at the schools in which he/she is interested.

The Letter of Intent is a document sometimes used when the coach and the student-athlete have agreed to "accept each other." The recruiting process halts when the Letter is signed, but admission to the institution could still be pending. Student-athletes must always remember that even the best-intentioned coach has only one thing on his or her mind: the success of the team. Usually, many potential players are juggled and recruited for a smaller number of positions to be filled. Remember that the admission office, not the coach, offers admission to a college or university!!

ARTISTS & MUSICIANS

The Art Supplement

For students **not** applying as an Art major:

Many students who demonstrate talent in art or music may not apply to college specifically with that major; however they may choose to submit an arts supplement as part of their applications to liberal arts colleges and universities. These supplements can have a favorable impact, because they provide a broader view of the student as an individual with a wide array of interest and talents. If you have dedicated time to a creative activity and have developed a substantial group of works that you feel proud of, then you should submit supplementary materials. If you are not sure about the strength of the work, how to make selections or how to present yourself in the best light, meet with one of the art or music faculty for guidance and assistance. Requirements and format for submission vary from school to school so be sure to check the specific guidelines for each one carefully.

Below is a general outline of some of the requirements for the arts supplement:

VISUAL ART

Send:

- Arts Supplement (Form AR) to the Common Application
- A visual arts portfolio on a digital CD or DVD or a folder of 8"x10" high quality printed color reproductions which may include some detail views. Regardless of format, a visual arts portfolio will vary in size depending on the school, (i.e. Yale Univ. request that students not submit more than 10 images).
- A detailed list of the works submitted, including title, medium, and dimensions (height x width x depth). Also indicate whether the work was made as part of a class assignment or under the direction of a particular teacher.

- Include a variety of works, in different techniques and media, especially from observation.
- A sealed letter of recommendation from a teacher who knows you and your work well.

MUSIC

Send:

- Arts Supplement (Form AR) to the Common Application
- A good quality recording on a digital CD or DVD playable audio player. Include 10 minutes of music in total, at least two pieces or excerpts that show you at your best, aim for contrast-- different styles, varied tempos, and technical variety--in any style or genre.
- A list of pieces you are submitting, including composer, title of piece, accompanist name (if any), and any other important details must be included along with your recording.
- A music resume summarizing experience, related activities, years studied, ensembles, courses (music history and theory), summer programs, performances, awards

For students planning to major in Art or Music....

Requirements for an Art School Portfolio or Audition for Conservatory/Music Major are more involved and detailed than those listed above, and may vary from one school to another. It is essential that you visit the website of the school you are interested in applying to and follow those directions carefully. The Art and Music faculty are always available to provide guidance and assistance in preparing these application materials.

CHAPTER VIII: STUDENTS INTERESTED IN CAREER-RELATED MAJORS

Architecture

Architecture can exist as a major at a college or be offered as part of the curriculum at a specific school within a larger university. Architecture programs vary. Some emphasize the technical, mathematical aspects of the field; others the artistic, aesthetic dimension. Be sure to research programs carefully to find those best suited to your talents and interests.

Entrance requirements for architecture majors vary. Some schools require a portfolio and will pay close attention to your talents as an artist; others will be more concerned with your record of achievement in math and physical sciences. As a general rule, subject tests in math and physics is required, and your performance in those classes is examined closely. It is difficult to gain admission to architecture programs if you have not taken calculus and done well, or if your standardized testing in math is not strong.

Some liberal arts colleges offer 3/2 programs in architecture. You spend three years studying the liberal arts in college and then move to another school where you study architecture for two years. Research such programs thoroughly before applying. Neither your liberal arts training nor your architecture training may be as thorough as it should; also, you will be switching colleges just as your classmates enter their senior year.

The Arts

You may be considering careers in the performing arts or visual media. Unlike other professions, such as architecture and engineering, it is not necessary to pursue these fields as an undergraduate in order to be successful in them as a professional. You may wish to attend a liberal arts college and pursue your artistic interests through extracurricular activities or limited coursework. If you do wish to pursue an arts major, check with informed sources (teachers, professionals in the field, admission officers, etc.) to make sure your goals are realistic.

You can pursue a major in the arts at a dedicated conservatory (such as Rhode Island School of Design or Juilliard), by attending a school for the arts located within a larger university (such as Tisch School of the Arts at NYU), or by selecting a major at a college or university.

An application to a conservatory or specialized art program is evaluated differently from an application to a liberal arts program. While grades and testing are important, your artistic background and talent – evaluated through portfolio or audition – are most critical. Your experiences as a student and performer, as well as recommendations from appropriate faculty, will be considered.

Business

It is not necessary to major in business as an undergraduate in order to attend a graduate

school of business or be successful as a business professional. However, if you choose to do so, you may study business at a dedicated college, a business school within a larger university (such as the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania), or as a major in a liberal arts college.

Business programs vary in selectivity. At most colleges, the business program is more selective than the liberal arts program. Of primary importance in the admissions process are your experiences in business, your overall academic standing, and your ability in math, measured through coursework and standardized testing.

Engineering

Students who are interested in and accomplished in math and physical sciences may wish to consider engineering. There are many fields of engineering – electrical, chemical, mechanical, civil, biomedical, aeronautical, nuclear, computer systems, etc. Be certain that you understand the differences in these fields before applying. Not all schools offer courses in all of them, and many will require that you specify an area of engineering when you apply.

You may pursue engineering at a college that has technical education as its principal focus (Cal Tech, MIT), at an engineering school within a larger university (Cornell, Duke, most state universities), a liberal arts college that offers a major (Dartmouth, Bucknell), or through a 3/2 program, where you study the liberal arts at one college for three years and then move to another to study engineering for two years. Research 3/2 programs carefully: neither your liberal arts nor your engineering education may be as strong as they would be had you concentrated in one area. Also, you will be leaving one campus just as your classmates are entering their senior year.

Engineering schools, programs and majors vary in their selectivity. They will be most concerned with your testing and course background in math and the physical sciences.

Law

It is not necessary to pursue a pre-law curriculum in order to attend law school. In fact, most selective colleges and universities do not offer such a curriculum. To gain admission to law school after graduation from college, you need to score well on the LSAT and have a strong academic record. Your undergraduate major is not of particular importance.

Medicine

In order to prepare for medical school, you do not need to major in a particular field, but you must meet medical school entrance requirements which include coursework in the sciences, math and English.

A limited number of colleges offer accelerated programs of study in medicine (Boston University, Brown, and others). These programs enable you to start your medical training as an undergraduate and earn a medical degree in less than the usual eight years. These programs are highly selective in admissions. Before considering accelerated study, you

must be absolutely certain that you wish to pursue a career in medicine. These programs focus on scientific and medical study; the liberal arts get squeezed out. If you have multiple academic interests, you should consider completing a four-year liberal arts program before you apply to medical school.

Service Academies/ROTC

You should consider the following before committing to the application process:

- The application process to the service academies is quite involved. In addition to academic and test credentials, you must pass physical examinations and, in most cases, be nominated by your senator or congressman.
- The academic strengths of the service academies are math, engineering, and the physical sciences.
- Your life as an undergraduate will be very different from what you are accustomed to, and what you would experience at other colleges and universities.
- Weigh your post-graduate obligations (at least six years) in return for a free education.

You will be enrolling at a military institution, training for a military career, and the US may be in a combat situation during your tenure in the service. Be certain these terms are acceptable to you.

You must start the application process to the **service academies** during the spring or summer prior to your senior year. “Looking Forward to Your Future,” published by the College Board, describes the process as follows:

1. Request and submit a Pre-Candidate Questionnaire:

- US Military Academy, Admissions Office, 606 Thayer Rd., West Point, NY 10996-9902; 800-822-2769; 914-938-4041

- US Air Force Academy, Admissions Office, HQ USAFA/RRS, USAF Academy, CO 80840-5651; 800-443-9266; 719-333-2520

- US Naval Academy, Candidate Guidance Office, 117 Decatur Rd., Annapolis, MD 21402-5018; 410-4361

2. Write to each of your senators and your congressman and ask that they consider you as one of their nominees. Include your name, address, telephone number, date of birth, social security number, name of your high school, year of graduation, and your parents’ names. List the academies that interest you and list your first choice, second choice, etc.

The Coast Guard has an admissions procedure similar to other highly competitive colleges. There is no nomination process. Write to:

Coast Guard Academy, Admissions Office, 15 Mohegan Ave., New London, CT 06320; 800-883-8724

ROTC scholarship programs involve a competitive application process as well. In addition to the written application, candidates must undergo a physical examination, formal interview, and a physical abilities test. Write for the application to:

- Air Force ROTC, Recruiting Division, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 36112-6663

- Army ROTC, Gold Quest Center, PO Box 3279, Warminster, PA 18974-9872

- Navy-Marine Corps ROTC, College Scholarships Program, CDR Navy Recruiting,

Command Code 314, 801 North Randolph St., Arlington, VA 22203-0705.

ROTC Scholarships are available at a number of colleges and universities in the US. In return for generous scholarships, graduates must serve in the military for eight years (active duty and/or the Reserves) following graduation.

NOTE: Chapter VII was adapted from “The Boston Latin School College Handbook” by permission of the Counseling Office at Boston Latin School.

CHAPTER IX: THICK ENVELOPE OR THIN?

You will receive a response from each of the schools to which you have applied by early April. The goal is for students to have several colleges and financial aid packages from which to choose. Your counselors will be available to support you throughout the time when you are receiving your responses and will work with you to make a final choice.

Of course, the response you want to see is an acceptance; the feared response is the denial. There is one other response: the Wait List.

The Wait List

All colleges accept a larger number of students than needed to fill their freshman classes.

They know that most students apply to more than one school, and that most will be accepted by more than one. This means that every school will accept students who will turn down their offers of acceptance. Colleges and universities place qualified students on their wait lists and accept students from the list if there is space in the class after the May 1 response date. In many cases, you will not be notified of your acceptance off the wait list until long after May 1, so you should proceed with notifying another school of your intention to enroll by May 1. If you are then taken off the wait list at the school you wish to attend, you would have to forfeit the deposit made to the first school. If you find yourself dangling on a wait list, it is always a good idea to ask yourself, "How much is attending this one college really worth to me?"

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of students applying to the most selective colleges nationwide, which has impacted colleges' ability to predict how many accepted students will choose to enroll in their college. This means that many colleges are increasing the use of the wait list as a way to avoid over or under enrollment. Should you be waitlisted at a college, you should meet with your counselor to discuss a potential plan of action. Colleges may have differing perspectives on how they see the wait list, but keep in mind that most colleges will want to see 3rd quarter grades as an additional tool for use in evaluating wait listed applicants.

CHAPTER X: APPENDICES

Appendix A: HCHS Counseling Office Policies and Procedures

GPA and Class Rank

HCHS does not provide to colleges your cumulative average for all of your work at the School. HCHS does not rank its students.

Transcript Release

Before your transcript or any other records can be sent to a college on your behalf, a signed transcript release form must be completed on Naviance.

Early Decision

HCHS abides by Early Decision commitments. It is the school's obligation to notify colleges when a commitment has been broken. If a student is accepted to a college under a binding early decision plan, his/her transcript will not be sent to other colleges.

Final Transcript

HCHS does not support "double-depositing" at the end of the school year. Your final transcript will be sent to only one college.

Filing Applications/Deadlines

Students are responsible for observing in-school deadlines for application processing. In-school deadlines are several weeks before the college deadlines. The Counseling Office will send your application, your transcript, counselor recommendation, and secondary school report.

Test Scores

Standardized test scores DO NOT appear on the HCHS transcript and are not disclosed by the school. You are responsible for having your test scores sent to colleges by the appropriate testing service(s).

Recommendations

Your counselor will send a confidential letter of recommendation on your behalf to each college to which you apply. You must complete and submit the Counseling Department College Process surveys before your letter is written.

Non-Standard Testing

HCHS follows the published procedures for non-standard testing for SAT and ACT Program tests. The guidelines are specific and outline the required documentation necessary for non-standard testing. The student and his parents are responsible for providing copies of the documentation to Lynda Rovine, the High School Learning Specialist, by the deadlines.

College Representative Visits

During the course of the academic year (September to December), the school hosts many college representatives so that students may make more informed decisions about colleges

College Visitation Days

College visits on other school days should be scheduled sparingly and only in the case where other means have been exhausted. Students are responsible for any class work missed and must take any regularly scheduled tests on the day of return.

Private College Application Policy

Beginning with the class of 2007, the Counseling Department has raised the total number of private schools that HCHS students may apply to, to eight (up from six). *There is no limit on the number of public or international colleges a student may apply to.* With this change in policy, it is our hope that students will apply to a broader array of schools and will have increased choices. In conjunction with thoughtful consideration of the range of competitiveness amongst the private colleges students apply to, the Counseling Department strongly recommends the following:

- That students complete at least one rolling public school application before October 15th. Applying early under this non-binding application program increases the likelihood of a favorable and swift response, setting a positive tone for the remainder of the college process.
- That students apply to at least one CUNY or SUNY school which provides a financially sound option.
- That students only apply to colleges they are interested in attending, thus limiting the likelihood that the students take away slots from other students who are truly interested in attending certain colleges.

It is the expectation of the department that students will apply to a range of colleges, and will have several safer private schools on their lists. Families wishing to deviate from this practice should put in writing (to the counselor) their intention to do so, acknowledging the inherent risk involved of not having any safe choices.

We believe that setting limits helps students focus on making good choices and careful decisions. This is a model for upfront decision making; that is, making decisions before applications are sent rather than after colleges make admissions decisions.

Appendix B: Glossary of College Terms

Additional Score Report

Forms that are used to have your SAT I/II scores sent to colleges to which you apply.

Advanced Placement

Advanced Placement is credit or placement in a college course on the basis of performance in high school or scores on exams such as the Advanced Placement (AP) Exams. Scores of 4 or 5 on the APs can often help you place out of introductory courses in college.

Bachelor of Arts and Sciences (BA/BS)

A standard degree given by a college or university to a person who has completed a four-year course of study or its equivalent in the liberal arts.

Candidate Notification Date

This is the date by which colleges notify students of their admissions decisions. Usually the date is April 1st.

Candidate's Reply Date

This is the date by which you must tell a school you will attend and make a deposit. Usually the date is May 1st. You are expected to notify at once any other college that has accepted you and which you do not plan to attend. This is not just a courtesy; it is crucial to other students who are on the waiting list.

Class Rank

Class rank is a practice used by some high schools that places students in order according to their academic standing. Hunter does NOT use class rank in student evaluation or recommendations. This is common in schools for gifted students, and is accepted practice in the college admissions process.

College Representative Visits

College admissions officials visit Hunter High primarily in the fall, during lunch period. The schedule of visits is posted on the calendar outside the counseling office. Even if you know the schools to which you will apply, take advantage of these visits to ask questions, learn more about the schools, and show your commitment to the college representatives.

College Scholarship Service (CSS AKA Financial Aid Profile)

CSS is the division of the College Board that assists college and scholarship programs in administering and analyzing your family's financial aid information by using pre-determined, standardized formulas. The form they use to do this is the CSS Profile. It will be available online in the early fall. Note the college deadlines for the Profile. Many colleges require this form in addition to the FAFSA and a college's own form.

College Visit

These are considered the most valuable experiences in choosing a college. You can go on the structured visits that may include an organized tour, an information session, auditing of a class and an overnight stay. Or you can do a less formal visit, perhaps through a Hunter alumnus (we can tell you who is where) or on your own. The type of visit you should do depends on your needs. Students typically schedule visits any time between spring of their junior year and early winter of their senior year.

Consortium

Consortium is a plan, by which colleges within close proximity share resources, which may include library facilities, courses, faculties and special cultural and educational opportunities.

CUNY

City University of New York

Degree

Degree is the title awarded by an educational institution to signify the completion of a program of study.

Doctorate/Professional Degree

The degree or status conferred by a college or university on a person who has completed a prescribed course of graduate study in a scholarly or professional field such as the sciences, medicine, humanities, law, public administration, etc. Some of these degrees are Ph.D., M.D., or Ed.D.

Early Action

You can apply early to college and receive notice of admission early. The deadline is typically in November and students are usually notified around mid-December. There is no commitment to attend if you are accepted. You can be accepted, deferred to the regular application pool, or rejected entirely. If you are rejected, the school will no longer consider your application. If you think you may want to apply early, check college catalogues and websites in the spring for application and SAT I/II deadlines.

Early Decision

Early Decision applications to college are binding. This means that if you are accepted under the early decision plan, you are legally obligated to attend. You cannot even apply to other schools. Deadlines are similar for those applying under early action. Check college catalogues and websites for more deadline information.

Educational Testing Service (ETS)

ETS is the program of the College Board that provides college entrance tests and services for students planning to attend college. Check out www.ets.org for more information.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

The FAFSA is used by the federal government to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid. It should be completed as soon as possible after January 1st of the year a student is matriculating. Forms are available online in the fall. Check www.fafsa.org for more information.

Financial Aid Package

Any combination of student and parent loans, scholarships, a job and grants to help you and your family pay your college bill.

Fee Waiver

Students with great financial need can sometimes have fees for SATs, college applications and financial aid forms waived. See your counselor or the department chair for more information.

High School Code (CEEB Code)

This is a number assigned to HCHS by the Educational Testing Service that is required on almost every application. Our number is 333-705. MEMORIZE IT.

Hunter Scholars Program/Internship/Independent Study Description

You must write a description of your Hunter Scholars Program (formerly called ICY Project), internship, and/or independent study to be included with your applications. This should be no more than one-page typed, single-spaced addendum. Speak with your counselor about the specifics. Copies must be prepared for each application.

Interviews for College

These can be on-campus interviews, often with an admissions representative, that are sometimes used as part of the evaluation process, or as information and question and answer sessions. We recommend that you do an interview only if you are comfortable in doing so. Ask your counselor for a mock interview to help you prepare. College alumni also do off-campus interviews in New York City. Do not forget to write a "thank you" card to the interviewer. You are responsible for scheduling interviews. Please review college interview policies on their websites.

Ivy League

These are the eight members of a college athletic association who compete with each other. They are Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale.

Liberal Arts

A broad general education including humanities, social sciences, arts and physical and natural sciences. Liberal arts do not include pre-professional studies such as business, engineering, or physical therapy.

Major

The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize in college. It usually consists of one-fourth to one-half of the total coursework.

Masters Degree

A degree given by a college or university to a person who has completed a prescribed course of graduate study. Masters degrees can be given in the humanities (M.A.), sciences (M.S.), fine arts (M.F.A.), business (M.B.A.), public health (M.P.H.), and other disciplines.

Matriculated

When a student is matriculated, she or he is working towards a degree.

National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT)/National Achievement Program for African American Students (NASP)

National Merit and National Achievement Semifinalists are chosen by their scores on the PSAT. Students who achieve high scores on their PSAT may become National Merit Semifinalists and may be eligible for scholarship funds. The National Achievement competition is similar, and is geared towards African American students. Identified students are notified in September if they are semi-finalists.

Pell Grants

This federal grant is applied for through the FAFSA application.

Praise Sheets

These are recommendations forms, available from the Counseling Office, that you can give your teachers, club advisors, coaches, employers, clergy, or any adult who knows you well. They help your counselor write a more comprehensive college recommendation letter. They are seen only by your counselor. You should have 5-7 in your folder by senior year.

Rolling Admissions

Rolling admissions is a process by which applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis. Large state schools, including SUNY, often have rolling admissions policies, rather than a finite deadline. When a school has a rolling deadline, the sooner you submit your application, the more likely you will be accepted.

Safer Schools

A safer school is a school that customarily admits students with a transcript and SAT scores similar to yours. It should be a school that meets your needs and that you may want to attend. Many students are now adding financial safety schools to their list: that is, schools they can afford regardless of the aid package offered.

Secondary School Report (SSR)

This part of the college application is completed by your college counselor and it includes your transcript, recommendation letter and other pertinent information requested by colleges.

State University of New York (SUNY)

There are over 20 four-year universities and colleges within the SUNY system. They are considered to be an excellent educational value because they are publicly funded.

Tuition Assistance Program (T.A.P.)

This is a New York State Program that provides tuition relief for students attending colleges in New York State.

Teacher Recommendation

This part of the application is completed by your teacher. You receive this with your application and deliver it to the teacher(s) whom you choose to write for you. Teachers then complete the forms and mail them to colleges. Each recommendation form must include a stamped, addressed envelope. We suggest that you highlight its due date and give teachers 3 weeks turnaround time. Say thank you and keep your teachers updated on your results. More information will be provided in the fall.

Transcript

The official record of high school or college courses, grades and credit earned. To be considered official, a transcript must be sent from one institution to another and cannot be sent by the student.

Appendix C: The College Folder

Your 11th grade counselor has your college folder. This is a place where you can keep track of your progress at Hunter and share experiences you are proud of. You can give your counselor items for your College Folder at any time. This is separate from the folder in the 4th floor hallway where you will receive mail from various people in the school. Much of this information can be submitted electronically on Naviance.

What do I put in my college folder?

- Praise Sheets.
- Examples of work, activities, summer programs, awards, newspaper articles, artwork, or creative writing samples.
- Anything else that demonstrates your strengths or interests.

Tips about Praise Sheets

- Teachers who know you well and can write effectively about you.
- Family, friends, priests, rabbis, employers, coaches, advisors.
- Let a teacher or writer of the recommendation know if you have something specific you would like them to emphasize.
- Give the writers sufficient time to complete it. Let them know if you have a deadline. Provide them with photocopy costs, if any.
- If it is from an outside writer, provide them with a stamped addressed envelope. Address it to your counselor.

Praise Sheets vs. Teacher Recommendations:

Praise Sheets—are written by teachers who are not writing your college recommendations. They go into your college folder for your counselor to read. If a student has gotten praise sheets from multiple teachers over the years, it provides a nice timeline of positive comments from your teachers. Students can also get Praise Sheets from people who are outside of the Hunter community.

Teacher Recommendations—are written by two of your teachers (usually from junior year) and are sent directly from teachers to the colleges you apply to.

Appendix D: A Short Introduction to Naviance

NAVIANCE/FAMILY CONNECTION WHAT IS IT?

- ◆ Web-based resource that supports course, career, and college planning
- ◆ Specific to our school
- ◆ Linked with Counselor's Office, a service that we use in the counseling office

WHAT CAN IT DO?

- ◆ Share plans
- ◆ Complete surveys
- ◆ Compare colleges
- ◆ Link to selected third party resources
(i.e. College Board, Financial Aid, College Athletics, College searches, etc.)
- ◆ Track deadlines
- ◆ Produce scattergrams
- ◆ Show schedule of college visits

HOW DO YOU REGISTER?

- ◆ Each parent receives a code
 - Use code to create a personal account
 - Codes are random and alphanumeric for security reasons
 - Codes can be used only once
- ◆ On your first visit, enter the code in the New User Box, then follow on-screen instructions
- ◆ On subsequent visits, sign in using the Returning User Box
- ◆ **If you forget your password**

Sign In for Returning Users

E-mail:

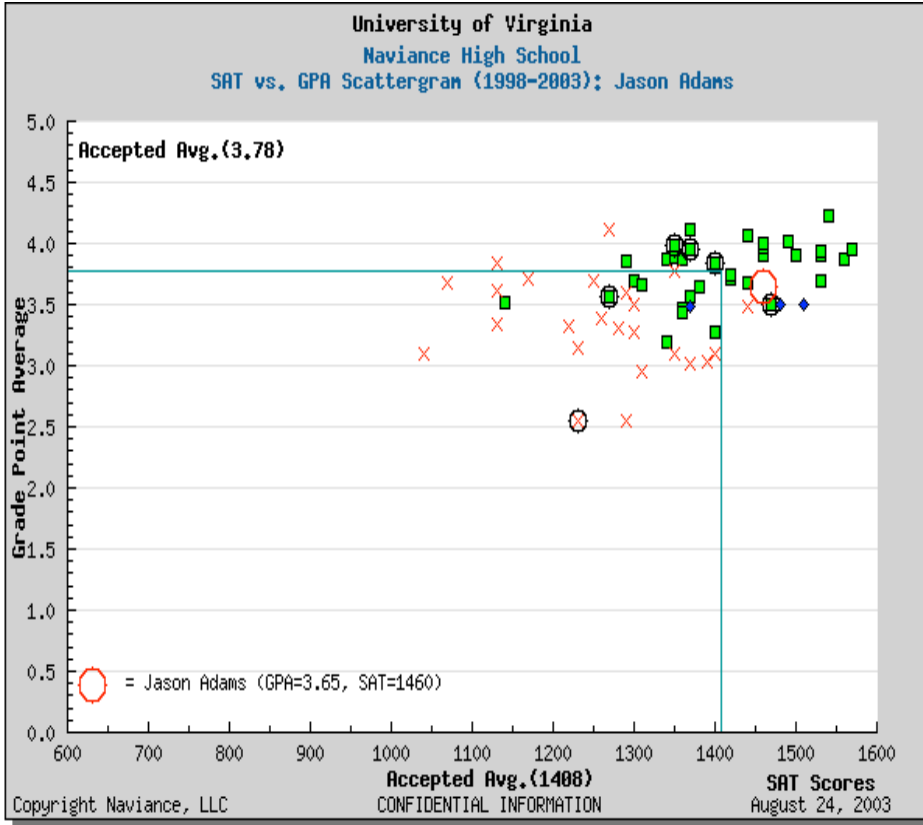
Password:

Remember my e-mail address

[here](#)

SCATTERGRAMS

SCATTERGRAMS provide you with a chart comparing your GPA and test scores to those who have applied and have been accepted and rejected. The circle represents you!



Graph Legend	
■ Accepted	◆ Waitlisted
× Denied	◆ Waitlisted/Accepted
	◆ Waitlisted/Denied
⊕ Accepted (Early Decision)	⊕ Accepted (Early Action)
⊗ Denied (Early Decision)	⊗ Denied (Early Action)
⊙ Deferred (Early Decision)	⊙ Deferred (Early Action)
⊕ Deferred/Accepted (Early Decision)	⊕ Deferred/Accepted (Early Action)
⊗ Deferred/Denied (Early Decision)	⊗ Deferred/Denied (Early Action)

VISIT SCHEDULE

Click on **VISIT SCHEDULE** to see when a college representative from the college(s) of your choice will be visiting Hunter College High School and use the icon to sign up.

Scheduled College Visits			
College	Date	Time	
University of Michigan	August 28, 2003	9:00 AM	 attending
Saint Joseph's University	September 25, 2003	9:15 AM	 sign up
Georgetown University	September 26, 2003	9:00 AM	 sign up
Colgate University	September 26, 2003	10:00 AM	 sign up
Connecticut College	October 9, 2003	11:30 AM	 sign up
Cornell University	October 15, 2003	8:15 AM	 sign up

NOTE: YOU WILL RECEIVE AN E-MAIL 24 HRS. BEFORE THE VISIT AS A REMINDER

Appendix E: How To Calculate Your GPA

While Hunter College High School does not rank students and does not provide a cumulative grade point average (GPA) to colleges, there may be times you are called upon to calculate your GPA. This worksheet is designed to help guide you through the process of calculating your GPA.

Your high school grade point average is calculated on all high school level courses completed after grade 7 through 12th grade (see exceptions under the explanations section).

To calculate your GPA (grade point average) follow these steps:

- Determine the point value for each grade earned using the appropriate scale (see Grade Definition Index – See page 2).
- Multiply the point value of the course by the credit attempted for the course. The product of this multiplication will be the grade points.
- Divide the cumulative grade points by the cumulative attempted hours.

Definition of Terms:

- Credit Hours - the hours assigned to a course.
- Point Value - the numerical value assigned to a grade; A+ = 4 points = 100, A = 4 points = 96, B = 3 points = 86, C = 2 points = 76, D = 1 point = 69, and F = 0 points = 60.
- Grade Points - number of credit hours for a course times the point value.
- Attempted Hours - credit hours for which you earned a grade (excluding AUD, CR, P, COM, W or MED).
- Earned Hours - credit hours for courses which you passed (with a grade of D or higher).

Explanations

- Any course taken in the 7th grade does not count in the computing of a cumulative average.
- Any course taken in the 8th grade that is not credit bearing (science and Phys. Ed.) should not count when computing the cumulative average.
- For all courses where final grades (or final semester grades as appropriate) were received (except AUD, CR,P, COM, W or MED), you multiply the credit hours for each course by the number of points appropriate for the grade you received in that course.

Grade Definition Index

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent Equivalent</u>	<u>Use this number to calculate on a 100 point scale</u>	<u>Use this number to calculate on a 4.0 scale.</u>	
A+	97-100%	99	4.0	*HCHS does not weight courses and uses a 4.0 scale. A number higher than 4.0 cannot be earned.
A	93-96%	96	4.0	
A-	90-92%	92	3.7	
B+	87-89%	89	3.3	
B	83-86%	86	3.0	
B-	80-82%	82	2.7	
C+	77-79%	79	2.3	
C	73-76%	76	2.0	
C-	70-72%	72	1.7	If you receive a grade of F , see the F grades policy
D	65-69%	69	1.0	
F	Failure	60	0.0	

Failing (F) Grades Policy

When a student receives an earned academic grade of "F" and the student subsequently retakes the course receiving a higher grade, the initial grade of "F" will be computed into the grade-point average along with the new grade. Both grades will be recorded on the student's transcript.

GPA Computation Example:

Course	Grade Value	(Times)	Credit Hours Attempted	(Equals)	Grade Points
ART-II	A = 4 = 96	X	1	=	4 or 96
ENGLISH II	B = 3 = 86	X	1	=	3 or 86
LATIN II	C = 2 = 76	X	1	=	2 or 76
MATH-II	D = 1 = 69	X	1	=	1 or 69
BIOLOGY II	F = 0 = 60	X	1	=	0 or 60
		Totals:	5		10 or 387

Divide 10 or 387(Grade Points Column) by 5 (Credit Hours Attempted Column) and the G.P.A. = 2.00 or a 77.4

Appendix F: Partnership Agreement

Student Responsibilities:

Bring your best effort to the classroom and your extracurricular commitments.

Participate fully in the life of the school—set a tone that younger students can admire.

Abide carefully by the School’s expectations. Recognize the consequences of disciplinary action, and understand that most schools will require you to report the circumstances of any major disciplinary infraction.

Research schools and visit during the spring and summer. Take tours, attend information sessions, and ask questions of current students. At HCHS, make a point to meet the visiting representatives whose schools interest you.

When making your final college list, be certain that you would like to attend every college on that list. Try not to prioritize the schools until you know where you have been accepted.

Meet all deadlines and fill out applications with care—begin early. Remember the smaller deadlines for materials required by the College Office—a draft of your essay, copies of your secondary school report forms, and your final college list.

Register for the appropriate SAT Reasoning tests, SAT Subjects test, and/or the ACT. Make sure that all colleges that you are applying to receive official score reports.

Read and understand the College Handbook.

Communicate honestly with your college counselor and your parents.

Advocate for self, ask questions, and take overall responsibility for the process. It is after all, YOUR process!

Parent Responsibilities:

Register unconditional positive support for your children. Remind them of their strengths and their talents, independent of any college admissions decisions, grades, or standardized tests.

Help your child visit as many colleges as possible in order to gain a broad perspective of how many fine choices are available to them. Listen carefully to the impressions your child has gathered and help him or her to take notes, but keep your own opinions to yourself unless they are solicited.

Keep an open mind, and encourage your child to keep an open mind as he or she researches colleges and universities. Help them avoid getting fixated on one or two schools too early in the process.

Be familiar with the policies and recommendations in the College Handbook—also available on our website.

Communicate openly and honestly with the Counseling Office.

College Counselor Responsibilities:

Work hard to get to know our students—to understand and appreciate their goals, talents, and interests.

Work with our students to construct an appropriate list of college choices that is both broad and deep. Developing an intelligent and balanced list is an essential task.

Be effective advocates for our students, presenting their transcripts and official school recommendations to the colleges so that they have the strongest chance of being given favorable consideration.

Treat the college admissions process as an opportunity for growth and self-knowledge and to ensure that students come away from it with a better understanding of themselves. The college admissions process has been described as an “independent study in decision-making” and we are here to provide the guidance and resources so that our students can make good decisions.

Listen to, learn from, and communicate with parents.

Appendix G: College-related reading List

Journal Articles

Author	Title	Source	Date Published
Gladwell, Malcolm	Getting In: The Social Logic of Ivy League Education	The New Yorker	10/10/2005
http://www.gladwell.com/2005/2005_10_10_a_admissions.html			
Lombardi, Kate	Detecting Tutors Hand in Applicant Essay	The New York Times	11/2/2005
http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E05E6DD163EF931A35752C1A9639C8B63			
Arenson, Karen	Thank-you Note Enters College Admissions Game	The New York Times	10/8/2007
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/09/education/09thanks.html			
Athavaley, Anjali	Big Pain on Campus: Applying to Multiple Schools	The Wall Street Journal	11/8/2007
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119448457512085957.html			
Gamerman, Ellen	How to Get Into Harvard	The Wall Street Journal	11/30/2007
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119638146482608732.html			
Shellenbarger, Sue	Rejection: Some Colleges Do it Better Than Others	The Wall Street Journal	04/29/2009
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124096471555766239.html			
Hechinger, John	College Applicants, Beware: Your Facebook Page is Showing	The Wall Street Journal	09/18/2008
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122170459104151023.html			
Hu, Winnie	VIP	The New York Times	01/06/2008
http://www.artofpotential.com/New%20York%20Times%20High%20School%20Guidance.pdf			
Eubanks, Ralph W.	Affirmative Action and After	The American Scholar	12/1/2008
http://newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/affirmative_action_and_after_9706			
Deresiewicz, William	The Disadvantages of an Elite Education	The American Scholar	06/01/2008
http://www.theamericanscholar.org/the-disadvantages-of-an-elite-education/			

Books: Many of these books are available from various libraries, but I have listed some information about cost for those who wish (or need) to purchase.

Author/Group	Title	Where to Buy
Steinberg, Jacques	The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 Amazon.com 10.88 in stock
Golden, Daniel	The Price of Admissions: How Americas Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges and Who Gets Left Outside the Gate	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 B & N.com 11.96 in stock

Kadison, Richard	College of the Overwhelmed: The College Mental Health Crisis and What Can be Done About It	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 www.josseybass.com 15.95 in stock
Sacks, Peter	Standardized Minds: The High Price of America's Testing Culture and What We Can Do to Change It	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 Amazon.com 14.43 in stock
Aries, Elizabeth	Race and Class Matters at an Elite College	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 Amazon.com 24.95 in stock
Kirp, David	Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 Amazon.com 15.84 in stock
Pope, Denise	Doing School: How We are Creating a Generation of Stressed-out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students	Widely available Example: 1/24/10 Amazon.com 10.04 in stock

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Counseling Office at Boston Latin School for permission to use material from “The Boston Latin School College Handbook.”