

**BREWSTER**



**ACADEMY**

1820

# ***COLLEGE HANDBOOK***





## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is addressed to juniors and seniors at Brewster Academy and to their families. We hope that it will answer many of the questions asked about college admission and that it will serve as a guide to the process of applying to colleges.

The College Office has the primary responsibility for college counseling at Brewster Academy. The college counselors review a student's college plans with the faculty team, encourage the student to discuss their applications with their teachers and advisors, and work closely with each student in the college selection process. Throughout the college counseling process, the student's advisor is also actively involved in discussing the student's plans and in reviewing college recommendations.

It is the goal of the college counseling program to ensure that after graduation each student continues his or her education in the most appropriate setting. To this end, the college counselors give each student individual advice on all matters relating to college admission; oversee and maintain the various records used in college planning, such as transcripts and the results of achievement and aptitude tests; maintain a college library and the resources necessary for thoughtful and intelligent decision-making about college; provide personal contact with individual colleges through conferences with college representatives; and support student applications by organizing completed applications, transcripts, and official school recommendations and submitting them to the appropriate colleges for admission review.

Laura C. Duffy



## **THE GOOD WORD**

A prominent college in New York uses a memorable acronym in its admissions work: **ADMIT**. When asked by parents, prospective students, and counselors what criteria they use to evaluate an applicant, the Admissions Office cites:

**A**chievement (quality and consistency of secondary school grades)

**D**ependability (evidence of assuming responsibility)

**M**otivation (that special drive which overcomes past mistakes and unfavorable conditions)

**I**nvolvement (commitment to community)

**T**ests (scores from the SAT and ACT)

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# ACADEMIC ROAD MAP TO COLLEGE

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

English 9  
Mathematics  
Science  
Foreign Language  
Social Studies  
Art/Music  
Instructional Support  
Other Courses  
(Five Units)

Brewster's academic program will allow a student to be admitted to the most selective colleges. Course load is the key word in college admissions. It is recommended that students enroll in the most challenging courses possible, and where appropriate, elect advanced placement and honors levels.

## General Objectives at Brewster Academy

- Develop basic study skills.
- Create a positive attitude toward learning.
- Build self-confidence.
- Prepare for college expectations.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

English 10  
Science  
Foreign Language  
Social Studies  
Art/Music  
Instructional Support  
Other Courses  
(Five Units)

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

English 11  
Mathematics  
Science  
Foreign Language  
Social Studies: U.S. History  
Art/Music, Computer  
Instructional Support  
Other Courses  
(Five Units)

## Brewster Strongly Urges

- Computer literacy.
- Building of sound writing skills.
- A third or fourth year of a foreign language.
- Mathematics courses beyond Algebra II.
- Fine Arts electives in drama, art, music.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

English 12  
Social Studies  
Mathematics  
Science  
Foreign Language  
Art/Music, Computer  
Other Elective Courses  
(Five Units)

## Brewster Graduation Requirements

English	4 units
Mathematics	4 units, including Algebra II
Science	4 units
Lab	2 units, including Biology
Foreign Language	2 units
Social Studies	4 units, including U.S. History

## **OVERVIEW OF THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **JUNIOR YEAR**

**October** – PSAT/NMSQT testing.

#### **January and February**

- Review PSAT scores and set goals for the year with College Office, advisor, and Instructional Support (if applicable).
- Take optional January SAT.
- Attend college meetings and College Luncheon.
- Register for May SAT.

#### **March**

- Visit college campuses during spring vacation.
- Meet individually with college counselor to start research on colleges.
- Complete College Office questionnaire, personality survey, and electronic college search program.

#### **April**

- Continue conferences with college counselor.
- E-mail colleges for catalogs and publication forms.
- Register for SAT II to be given in June at a test center near your home.
- Work on résumé.

#### **May**

- Attend college fair.
- Attend SAT review workshops.
- Continue conferences with college counselor.
- E-mail colleges for additional information if necessary.
- Take SAT.
- Work on résumé.

#### **June**

- Take SAT II.
- Visit colleges.
- Interview with colleges.

(continued)

## SUMMER MONTHS

- Complete requests for college materials.
- Visit colleges.
- Interview with colleges.
- Work on resume and essay.

## SENIOR YEAR

### September and October

- Complete résumé.
- Meet with college counselor regularly throughout the fall semester.
- Attend college fair at the University of New Hampshire.
- Continue to complete college applications on paper or online.
- Register for October and November SAT I and SAT II.
- Attend college meetings for seniors and postgraduates.
- Take October SAT if appropriate.
- Give Brewster Academy recommendation forms to faculty members and request that forms be returned to College Office.

### November

- **Submit early decision applications by November 1.**
- Take November SAT I and SAT II if appropriate.
- Register for ACT if appropriate.
- Meet with college counselor regularly throughout the fall semester.
- Meet with college representatives visiting Brewster Academy.
- Note November deadlines for applications to California and New York state schools.
- Double-check deadlines on all college applications.
- Give Brewster Academy recommendation forms to faculty members and request that forms be returned to the College Office.
- Plan final college visits.
- Finalize college list; one or two probables (90 percent chance); two to four possible (75 percent chance); one or two reaches (25 percent chance or less).

### December

- Take SAT I and SAT II.
- Continue meetings with college counselor.
- Submit all college applications to College Office prior to Christmas vacation, if possible.

## **January**

- Take SAT I and SAT II.
- Complete Financial Aid Form (FAFSA and Profile) between January 1 and February 1.
- Begin scholarship research at local guidance office, state education offices, and online.

## **April**

- Make final college decisions.
- Notify College Office of college decisions.

## **May**

- Take AP examinations if applicable.
- Confirm acceptances with College Office.
- Send reply and deposit to college of choice by **May 1**.
- Respond to all other remaining acceptances once final decision has been made.

## **June**

- The College Office will send your final transcripts to the college you plan to attend.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Responsibilities of Brewster Academy's College Office**

- Interview and advise students and parents.
- Help make initial college list for consideration.
- Write official school recommendations.
- Mail transcripts to colleges at the time of application and send final grades of senior year as required by the colleges. Any other grades of the senior year are sent at the request of the student or the college.
- Provide on-going advice for students and parents.
- Inform students through school meetings and daily notices when college representatives visit.
- Provide students with registration forms and testing information.
- Provide all possible support for student to college admission officials.

### **Responsibilities of Brewster Academy Students**

- Do preliminary research on colleges: check websites, visit with college representatives who come to the school, confer with Brewster's College Office.
- E-mail college websites for applications and information.
- Make use of the Brewster College Handbook.
- Arrange for college visits and interviews.
- Give résumé to College Office by November 1 of senior year.
- Have personal essay checked by English teacher or advisor.
- Complete Common Application by Thanksgiving vacation. Finalize application with parents before returning from holiday break.
- Be sure to have test scores (SAT I/SAT II) sent to each college. Additional Request Forms may be obtained at the College Office.
- Ask teachers to write recommendations and file them with Brewster's College Office. Make requests well in advance of the due date.
- Complete and file electronically the FAFSA and Profile financial aid form with the College Scholarship Service (CSS) in Princeton, New Jersey.
- Notify the College Office of any correspondence from colleges indicating that the application is not complete.
- Notify the College Office of college acceptances, rejections, and wait lists.
- Send a card withdrawing applications once you have been admitted to the college you will attend.
- Notify Brewster's College Office of the college you will attend, as a final transcript must be sent by the school.

- Make certain the acceptance deposit is sent to the college well before the May 1 deadline.
- ***Maintain strong grades throughout the senior year.*** All college acceptances are based on the assumption that you will complete the year in good standing.

## COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING

For many students at Brewster, the first encounter with the college admission process comes when taking a series of standardized tests.

### Description of the Tests

Because educational tests play a significant role in college admission decisions, it is important to know exactly what the tests are and for what purposes they are used. Standardized educational tests are designed to measure a student's ability to perform in school. It is important to note that the "abilities" measured by these tests are not some assessment of "inborn" capacity, but reflect the individual's present skills. The tests are "standardized" insofar as they follow a prescribed format and are administered under uniform conditions to minimize bias. Under the auspices of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), a non-profit organization composed of more than 2,000 colleges, high schools, and educational associations, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) develops, distributes, and evaluates several million educational tests each year. Students at Brewster take several of the tests produced by ETS.

### PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

The PSAT is a short form of the SAT given in the fall to high school juniors. It is useful in predicting SAT scores and is also used to determine eligibility to compete for National Merit Scholarships.

### SAT I – Scholastic Aptitude Test

A three-hour multiple-choice test measuring verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities. The SAT is scored on a scale of 200 to 800. The test is given in October, November, December, January, March, May, and June. Most competitive colleges and universities require the SAT I for admission.

### SAT II – Subject Tests

One-hour tests offered in many subject areas and designed to measure specific accomplishments and knowledge in a single field. Most SAT II tests are entirely multiple choice and are scored on a 200 to 800 scale. Students may take one, two, or three subject tests at one sitting.

#### SAT II subject tests include:

- **Literature** – measures how well a student understands various literary concepts.

- **Writing\*** – assesses general ability in written expression (offered through Spring 2005).
- **Math-Level IC** – students must have calculator to solve some problems.
- **Math-Level IIC** – for students enrolled in the fourth year of mathematics. A calculator is required.
- **Language** – for students completing at least three years of a language.
- **U.S. History**
- **World History**
- **Biology**
- **Chemistry**
- **Physics**

We strongly urge our students to take SAT II tests only in the subjects they are currently taking. Some colleges require three subject tests.

*\* In March 2005, the SAT II Writing test will no longer be offered; a writing section will be added to the SAT I.*

### **AP (Advanced Placement)**

ETS also develops and administers Advanced Placement examinations in a variety of subjects. The three-hour tests combine written, objective, and aural sections, and are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Advanced Placement examinations enable students to demonstrate their competence in college-level courses. Taking Advanced Placement courses may provide the following benefits:

- exemption from taking beginning courses in college
- eligibility for honors and other special programs not open to college freshmen
- A year's credit granted and sophomore standing (for three to four AP examinations with a grade of 4 or 5) at a number of colleges and universities.

AP examinations, sponsored by the CEEB, are administered at Brewster Academy in May each year.

### **ACT – American College Testing**

A competitor to the testing program of the ETS, ACT offers similar examinations that are most often taken by students wishing to enter colleges in the Midwest and West. It is comprised of four 35 to 50-minute tests in English, mathematics, social science, and natural sciences. The test offers four separate scores plus a composite score that averages the tests. At some colleges, the ACT may be submitted in place of SAT II subject tests.

## **Purpose of the Tests**

The primary aim of standardized educational tests is to provide colleges with an equitable means of evaluating applicants. The examinations allow the admission office to identify ability regardless of variations in school programs, grading systems, region, and other factors. In the application process, the SAT I is probably the most important standardized test.

But by no means are tests necessarily the central feature of an application. Colleges indicate that the most important criterion for determining success in college is success in high school. SAT I, SAT II, and AP test results form only a part of a college application.

## **Test Dates**

Dates of testing are published in the school calendar and on the College Office bulletin board. The College Office will advise students of specific dates and filing deadlines.

## **SAT Preparation**

The question is often asked whether coaching or “prep” courses for the SAT can increase test scores. Brewster Academy believes that a systematic and thorough review of SAT sample questions and a good understanding of the test procedure and content can have a positive effect on SAT scores. Brewster provides several opportunities for students to prepare for the tests.

## **THE COLLEGE SEARCH**

During the late winter and spring of your junior year, you will meet with your college advisor. By the time you leave for summer vacation, you should have a large list of colleges to explore. Your list might include several “reach” colleges, a few “possible” colleges where your chances of admission are 50-50, and two or three “probable” colleges where your admission is fairly well assured.

By the time you return for the fall term of your senior year, your college list may have undergone considerable revision, particularly after visiting different campuses and researching college brochures. Additional fall meetings will be held with the College Office in an effort to reduce the list to about six colleges, keeping several choices in each category; however, the number of applications filed by each student is flexible.

Remember that the “reach,” “possible,” and “probable” colleges are determined solely by the degree of difficulty in acceptance and not necessarily by the academic excellence of the college. There may be a “possible” college that has one of the top academic programs in the country in a particular field of study.

### **Learning About Colleges**

At first thought, the prospect of going off to college can seem both exhilarating and daunting to many high school students. But with careful investigation of the choices, a thorough self-assessment, and close attention to deadlines, every student will be able to find an appropriate college.

The place to begin is with yourself. In order to know where you want to go to college, or even if you want to go right now, it is important to review your experience in school and to reflect upon what it is that you hope to do in the future.

In the spring of the junior year, we will help you begin the process of self-assessment by asking you to fill out a detailed questionnaire, personality inventory, and perform a computer-based college search. Then, in an individual conference, we will review what you have written and you will begin your investigation of the various colleges and universities in which you have an interest.

### **College Office Resources**

To help you conduct your research, we maintain a collection of materials in the College Office.

- **College catalogs**  
We have catalogs from approximately 250 colleges and universities. These books contain a vast amount of information ranging from campus maps and photographs to entrance requirements and fees. They are arranged alphabetically by the name of the college.
- **Reference materials**  
College guide books, SAT I and SAT II registration forms, career encyclopedias, schools abroad information, and pamphlets on how to write the college essay are available in the College Office. In addition, the office has a library of videos on selected colleges.
- **Financial aid**  
The office maintains a file of financial aid forms and other sources of aid and scholarships.

### **College Representatives**

A valuable way of finding out about colleges is to attend meetings with representatives from a number of colleges that visit Brewster Academy every fall and winter. These meetings are announced in several ways: a calendar of all visitors is maintained on the College Office bulletin board and online at [www.brewsteracademy.org](http://www.brewsteracademy.org); announcements are made during all-school meetings; and e-mail reminders are sent out regularly. To get the most out of these conferences, you should research the college beforehand by reading the catalog and visiting its website. Prepare a list of questions to ask the representative during the meeting. Make a note of the representative's name and position—it may prove helpful in future communications with the college's admission office.

### **Campus Visits**

It is a good idea to visit four or five campuses. In several hours on a campus, you can often learn more about a college than you can by reading literature prepared by the admission office. A college visit gives you an opportunity to see the school in action and to talk with the students who go there. Schedule a trip during spring vacation in the junior year, during the summer, in the fall of senior year (particularly over fall long weekend), or after you have applied to and received acceptances from colleges in April of your senior year. We will help you plan individual trips to colleges by giving you the names of admission officers to contact for visits and interviews.

## What to Look For and What to Ask During a Campus Visit

### Physical Facilities

- Geographic location
- Setting (proximity to other colleges or attractive cultural opportunities)
- Size of the school
- Size of the freshman class
- Dormitories
  - Ⓜ Location vis-à-vis classes and dining rooms
  - Ⓜ Coed? If so, how organized (by floor, by suite, by room)?
  - Ⓜ Single sex (or other distinctions: e.g., multi-cultural student dorm, language dorms, honors dorms, which may be particularly quiet)?
  - Ⓜ Rules? Parietals? Are there enforced quiet hours?
  - Ⓜ Where do freshmen live? Are they grouped together and is there a proctor system, or are the freshmen randomly distributed?
  - Ⓜ Are there sufficient rooms for all interested students? (Some sophomores find themselves dorm-less).
  - Ⓜ Are most rooms singles, doubles, triples, or suites?
  - Ⓜ *Ask to see the worst dorm on campus; you may end up living there.*

### Fraternities, Sororities, and Eating Clubs

- Do they exist?
- What affect do they have on campus life?
- Are there exclusive clubs and to what extent do they affect the social atmosphere?
- Are they coed?
- Is the social life of the school organized around their activities?
- What pressure is there to join?

### Dining Rooms

- Are a variety of food plans available?
- Is there a cooperative house in which students do their own cooking?
- Where is breakfast served?

### Extracurricular Facilities

#### Theater(s)

- Type(s)
- Equipment

- Open to non-theater majors?
- Student directors?
- Is there a permanent repertory company?
- How many presentations are there yearly?
- What kinds of presentations are there?

### **Athletics**

- What are the facilities for men? for women?
- What division level for each sport?
- How important are they to campus life?
- Is there school spirit?
- What opportunities exist for the non-athletic but enthusiastic person?

### **Laboratories**

- Foreign language?
- In science, what are the lab setups like and are they available to undergraduates?

### **Library**

- Is it centrally located?
- How extensive are the hours?
- Is this where large numbers of students go to study?
- Is it generally quiet?
- Is there an inter-library loan program?

### **Computers**

- Do you need to bring your own?
- Will you be using them in most courses?
- Is the campus networked or wireless?

### **Special Facilities Unique to the College**

- Art studios and museums?
- Dance studios?
- Observatory for astronomy students?

### **School Life**

- What is the calendar organization (term/trimester)?
- Are summer programs available or required?
- Is there a special winter or January program?
- How many courses do students usually take per term?

## **Alternative Study Programs**

- Are there exchange programs with other colleges for a term/year?
- Are there foreign study programs available?
- Is pass-fail an available option? Under any special conditions? How many students use this option?

## **Academic Policies**

- How many courses are needed to graduate?
- What is the honors program like?
- How soon does a student have to declare a major?
- Are there distribution requirements?
- Are there any interdisciplinary majors available?
- What unusual undergraduate majors are available (e.g. architecture, agriculture, business, six-year medical program, three-two engineering program, hotel management)?
- How many courses are you permitted to take that are not in your major?

## **Academic Issues**

- What is the typical (**not the average**) class size? What differences exist between introductory and advanced classes in terms of size?
- How soon may students be admitted to seminars?
- Are tutorial writing labs, math labs, or basic skills remediation available?
- What opportunities are there for independent study?
- What departments are particularly distinguished?
- Are large classes broken down into section meetings? Who leads them?
- Who determines the grades?
- What types of tests are given in large classes?
- Do the “academic stars” of the faculty teach undergraduates?
- What characterizes the academic atmosphere (e.g. competition)?
- Is there active interest in political, social, or world issues?

## **What percentage of students leave (willingly or unwillingly):**

- As freshmen?
- Before the end of their senior year?
- Is there a difference in the attrition rate between male and female students?

**What percentage of graduating seniors go on to graduate school? In what areas of study?**

**Is there an active placement service that helps students find jobs both during the time they are in college as well as after they have graduated?**

**What student health services including counseling are available?**

### **Other**

- Check out the bulletin boards.
- Pick up copies of the student and town newspapers.
- Look through the most recent yearbook, usually found in admission offices.
- Arrange to eat a meal where the students eat.
- Talk to many students; don't let the tour guide be your only source of information.
- Find out whether a strong student government exists.
- What are the regulations for student behavior? Is there an honor code?
- Are freshmen subject to any special restrictions that may isolate them from other students?
- **Keep a diary** of your impressions.

## **The College Interview**

### **Preparation**

- Make an appointment by calling the admission office. You do not need to speak with an admission officer to make an appointment.
- Read about the college in advance. Avoid asking questions that can easily be answered by reading the institution's literature.
- Know yourself well. Review your resume, student questionnaire, transcript, rank in class, SAT scores, etc.
- Using index cards, make notes of questions you would like to ask the interviewer and information about yourself that you would like to share with him or her.

### **When you Arrive on Campus**

- Allow sufficient time to arrive at the school before your scheduled interview.
- Take a tour and check facilities, including dormitories.
- Talk to students, a very useful source of information about a college.

Remember that students' personal opinions must be considered with care.

- Visit a class; talk with a faculty member if possible.
- Have a meal on campus.
- Visit the coffee shop, snack bar, or pub as a place to meet students.
- During your visit, read the campus newspaper as a means of finding out what the issues are on campus. Also check the bulletin boards in the student union or cafeteria.
- ASK QUESTIONS! Don't be bashful!

### **When you Have Your Interview**

- Be prompt. Call if you are going to be delayed.
- Do not be concerned if your interviewer is someone other than the dean or director of admission. If the interview is an important part of the admission process at a college, all interviews given on campus have equal weight. All interviewers are well trained and prepared to represent the institution.
- You must help the interviewer visualize you as part of his or her student body. Smile, be friendly, considerate, and polite.
- Be yourself – do not pretend to be something or someone you are not!

***Body Language  
Makes a  
Loud Statement***

- Don't cross your arms. It makes you appear bored, unenthusiastic, and unconcerned.
- Look directly into the interviewer's eyes – try not to shift around.
- Sit up straight, legs crossed or together, and lean forward toward the interviewer to show interest.
- Answer questions to the best of your knowledge and ability. Do not be afraid to admit that you do not know the answer. Gain the time you need to think by asking a question such as, "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean. Could you repeat or rephrase that please?"
- Be ready to volunteer information – know your scores, rank in class, latest grades, and what courses you now take or will take in your senior year. Be prepared to discuss your most important extra-curricular activities, your job, summer activities, or your special interests. Interviewers like to know what is important to you and how you spend your time outside of school.
- Watch for non-verbal clues that let you know how the interviewer is responding to you. Is he or she relaxed, alert, interested, following you, and encouraging you with nods, smiles, and comments? If so,

you are on the right track. Develop your points fully, but don't talk too much. As soon as you sense a loss of interest (paper shuffling, averted eyes, squirming), perhaps you are going off track. Get back on track by asking: "Have I covered that point adequately? Is there anything else you would like to know?"

- If the interviewer asks what you feel you can offer the college, comment on such topics as:
  - ® Your active interest in studying.
  - ® Your desire to meet people and be a member of a community.
  - ® Your aim to utilize your talents, skills, and interests by participating in school activities.
  - ® Your intention to learn and mature by involving yourself in all aspects of the school.
  - ® When you are asked questions by the interviewer, do not answer with just a 'yes' or 'no.' Elaborate briefly. The interviewer wants to have you converse.
- Pay attention to the interviewer and try to respond directly and specifically. Don't try to analyze the interview while it is in progress.
- Before you leave, be sure you have your interviewer's name and title. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and interest in you.

### **Dealing With the Unexpected Interview**

You may meet with an interviewer whose style is to be provocative and who asks unexpected questions. There isn't any way to prepare for the surprise question except to recognize that the possibility exists and that it is more likely to occur in the most selective colleges. Such interviews may be more stressful by aggressively challenging you and testing how you respond.

Some questions with which you might be confronted are:

- What do you think you can do for this college?
- There is an invisible box on my desk with things in it that describe you. What is in the box?
- What would you like to talk about?

But even these questions shouldn't be threatening if you have done your homework preparing for the interview.

- Keep your responses honest. Don't try to fake anything.
- Keep cool. Take a deep breath and remain composed.
- If you don't understand the question, ask what the interviewer means.

- Don't pose as an expert on matters you know little about. It is okay to say "I don't know."
- You can say, "I'll have to think that over. Is it okay if I write you about this?"
- Be courteous and tactful. If you think you really haven't been given a fair shake by an interviewer, you may write a letter to the dean of admission and request another interview with a different member of the admission staff. Make sure you have correctly evaluated the situation and can back up your statement with examples.
- Colleges are interviewing hundreds of people. **Somehow you must stand out.** The best way to do this is through showing confidence, willingness to learn and work, and a genuine excitement about the challenge of going to this college. *Enthusiasm is contagious!*

### **After the Interview**

Send a thank you note to the interviewer. It shows that you have taken the time and interest to think about your recent interview. Try to trigger the interviewer's memory of you in a personal way.

### **Other Means of Exploring Colleges – Alumni Interviews**

Though individual research, college conferences, and campus visits are probably the most important means of getting reliable information about colleges, they are certainly not the only means. College alumni are a valuable resource to tap. Obviously, the more recently a person has graduated, the more knowledgeable he or she can be expected to be about the current situation. But even wise old graduates can remember significant details about their experiences.

## WHAT DO COLLEGES REQUIRE FOR ADMISSION?

Most admissions committees evaluate candidates using the following criteria:

### Academic Record and School Report

This is the most important facet of a student's academic profile. It will include input from all those teachers who have been involved in the student's academic, extracurricular, athletic, and dormitory career. It will also include the student's entire high school academic record. The eleventh and twelfth grade transcripts play the most significant role in college admissions. College admission officers often state that the most important aspect of a student's academic record is his or her course selection and the grades he or she earned in those courses. Colleges are looking for motivated students who will push themselves in their studies. Although motivation is an intangible quality, the selective colleges look first and foremost at your course load as an indication of your motivation. **Remember, course load is the key to successful college admissions.**

### Personal Essay

The personal essay is probably the most neglected aspect of the college application. It is the most important statement written about you. It conveys who you are and fills in the "gaps." Don't try too hard to impress. Honest insights about what is special and meaningful to you make for effective and convincing essays. Be specific – don't generalize.

Roger Campbell, former director of admission at Northwestern University, suggests the following approach: "If you think of the essay as an opportunity to say something you want to say – not just what you think we expect you to say – then your personality as well as your ideas and experiences will come across with energy and naturalness, and that's what the essay should do."

Be creative, take chances, and don't be afraid to show a sense of humor. The best essays usually concentrate on a specific experience, talent, relationship, or issue that affects you deeply. The worst essays are those that rehash the list of activities pursued that have already been documented elsewhere on the application.

### Test Data

The end of the junior year is the time to take subject tests in year-long courses such as U.S. history, chemistry, physics, biology, languages, and math. By December of the senior year, each student will have taken the SAT I at least twice and perhaps two or three of the SAT II subject tests. Please

note that the SAT II in Writing will no longer be offered after March 2005. The essay and multiple-choice questions will be added to the SAT I.

When you register for the SATs you may list the names of four colleges to which you wish to have your scores sent. If you wish to send your scores to additional colleges, the Additional Report Request Form is available at the College Office or online.

### **Teacher Recommendations**

Most colleges still request one or two teacher recommendations. The more selective colleges put a great deal of time into reading these references for evidence of your motivation and verbal ability. Remember, teachers are busy, so get your forms to them early in the fall in order to give them time to write their recommendations. Request that the recommendation be sent electronically to the College Office to be kept on file.

### **Interview**

We have already emphasized the importance of the interview. Many of the very popular colleges will not be able to interview everybody – this will not be held against you. Many others may schedule an alumni interview during the late fall and early winter.

## **REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ADMISSION**

### **Inadequate Preparation**

Course work demonstrates insufficient preparation to meet the demands of college level work. The high school transcript should reflect solid courses. It is better to take “honors” courses rather than less demanding courses. Make certain that upper level math and science courses are not neglected.

### **Not Working to Potential**

A student’s testing indicates that there is plenty of ability, but the student takes easy courses and gets low grades. This indicates that there is some lack in motivation and interest in school work.

### **A Non-Contributor**

It is very important to be involved and self-directed in extracurricular activities or have some special talent or hobby. College-bound students are usually asked to demonstrate some area outside of the classroom where they have exercised leadership in music, sports, student government, publications, or community service.

### **Missing Deadline Dates**

It is important to understand the deadlines that have been established by the admission offices. Deadlines vary so it is important to check the admissions section of the catalog or website for these dates. California and New York state universities have early deadlines, usually at the end of November.

### **No Alternative Choice of Major**

There are several major fields that are very competitive. A candidate may have solid test scores, good credentials, and top recommendations, but due to the number of other highly qualified candidates, a major course of study may be filled. By checking an alternative major, students have a better chance of being admitted to the college of their choice.

## FINANCIAL AID

In your college quest, it will become apparent that colleges come with hefty price tags. Some are more costly than others. Fortunately there is help available in various ways to finance college costs. At most schools, 40 to 50 percent of the student body receives some kind of financial aid.

### Types of Financial Aid

Financial assistance comes from three principal sources: the federal government, colleges and universities, and a variety of local and national private scholarship programs. When financial assistance is awarded to a student, it usually comes in a “package” of grants, loans, and opportunities for on-campus work. The following list contains a description of some of the most common programs. (For most of these programs, a student must demonstrate need, a concept which will be explained in the next section.)

- **College Work-Study Program (CWSP)**

A federally-funded program that provides colleges money to pay for student work on campus. Students must demonstrate need to qualify.

- **Pell Grant**

A federally-funded grant program that provides students up to \$4,000 per year. The program is targeted for low income families.

- **Federal Perkins Loan**

A federally-funded, low-interest loan program available through the financial aid offices of individual colleges. Students who qualify by demonstrating need may borrow up to \$4,000 per year of college. The federal government pays the interest payments until after the student is graduated.

- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)**

A federally-funded program providing students between \$100 and \$4,000 per year. These grants are administered directly by individual colleges and are awarded to those students who can demonstrate need.

- **Social Security Benefits**

If one parent is currently receiving Social Security benefits, students are eligible for school benefits providing they are between the ages of 18\ and 21, attend college full time, and are unmarried.

- **Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)**  
A program for parents of dependent students, providing loans for the cost of attendance minus financial aid per year. Loans are made based on parent credit-worthiness and are available through local banks.
- **Stafford Loan**  
A loan program available to any student enrolled in college. These loans are negotiated through a local bank.

Several special scholarship programs also deserve mention. The **National Merit Scholarship Program**, based on student performance on the PSAT, annually awards more than 8,000 scholarships worth approximately \$33 million. A similar program for black students, the **National Achievement Scholarship Program**, awards grants to more than 800 students based on PSAT performance.

A variety of local and state scholarships are available as well as resources for computer-based national scholarship research. The College Office has information on these as well as other scholarship sources.

### **How to Pay for College**

Most financial assistance is awarded to students who can demonstrate a need. The family fills out a Financial Aid Form (FAFSA), listing income, assets, liabilities, and dependents in college. The College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid Profile performs a need analysis based on the information contained in the FAFSA, and forwards an “expected contribution” report to the colleges to which the student is applying. Colleges then compare the “expected contribution” with the projected figure for total college expenses. If there is a gap, and if the student is accepted, the college will meet the need of the student in the form of a package of a grant, loan, and opportunity for work.

It should be pointed out that the Admission Office and the Financial Aid Office in selective colleges are two distinct operations. An application for financial assistance will be reviewed separately and should not prejudice the evaluation of the student’s application for admission. It also should be noted, however, that admissions and financial aid applications are generally due at the same time.

## Overview of Steps in the Financial Aid Process

- **October, junior year**  
Take the PSAT to qualify for National Merit Scholarships.
- **September, senior year**  
Read the financial aid information of those colleges to which you are applying. Contact the Director of Financial Aid for information about aid programs and special scholarships. Ask whether any special applications are necessary.
- **After November 1, senior year**  
Pick up a copy of the FAFSA in the College Office or online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- **Between January 1 and February 1, senior year**  
File the **FAFSA** and **CSS Profile**. Keep a copy for your records.
- **January - March**  
Review carefully the acknowledgement sent you by CSS and make sure all information is correct.

Make sure you have filed all individual financial aid applications at the colleges to which you are applying. Due dates are usually the same as those for admission applications.

Review your award letter carefully and address any necessary questions to the Director of Financial Aid.

### Financial Aid Websites

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) – The FAFSA is used for federal loans, grant and work study, and state and college aid.

[www.financialaid.org](http://www.financialaid.org) – Free source on loans, scholarships, and more.

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) – Best scholarship search engine

## **RESOURCE MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN THE COLLEGE OFFICE**

- College catalogs, informational pamphlets, and videos
- College addresses and telephone numbers
- College guidebooks: Lovejoy's Guide, Peterson's Guide, College Admissions Data, The Insider's Guide, Peterson's College Selection Service
- Booklets and pamphlets on how to write college essays
- Financial aid forms
- Service academy catalogs and ROTC information
- Encyclopedia of Careers
- Personality mosaic
- Summer programs
- Schools abroad
- Alternative Year Programs: Dynamy, Outward Bound, Project Seal, ITHAKA, Audubon Program, National Outdoor Leadership Program
- Computer access to internet resources and college search programs

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Traditional Application** – Colleges require students to apply by established deadline dates, generally January 15 or February 1. On or about April 15, acceptance notices are sent out. The acceptance letter usually specifies the reply date.

**Rolling Admissions** – Colleges and universities review applications as they are received and notify applicants within four to six weeks. It is wise to apply early because applications are typically not accepted after an admission quota has been reached.

**Early Action** – A plan used by some colleges in which a student who applies in the fall of his senior year (usually with a November 1 or 15 deadline) will be notified of an acceptance, deferral, or rejection in December. If accepted, the student is not committed to attend the institution and has until May 1 to decide.

**Early Decision** – A student applies to a college by November 1 and agrees to enroll in that institution if accepted. The student is typically notified by January 1 and agrees to then withdraw all other applications.

**NOTE:** In applying under the above two admissions policies, students are presenting their credentials to colleges based on their records up through the junior year.

**Deferral** – The final evaluation of a student who has applied for early action or early decision is postponed to be included with the regular application pool.

**Wait List** – A reserve of students suitable for enrollment but not accepted. If openings occur, colleges admit students.

**CEEB** – The College Entrance Examination Board, a non-profit organization that oversees services, etc., pertaining to college admissions. Each school has a CEEB identification number. *The Brewster Academy CEEB identification number is 300 635.*

**ETS** – Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey—the testing division of CEEB.

**Financial Aid Form** – Students applying for financial aid must have their parents fill out the FAFSA and the Profile where appropriate. These forms are sent to the College Scholarship Service, which gives the colleges an evaluation of the student's need.

**3-2 Program** – A program that combines three years of undergraduate study and two years of professional study. The student earns a bachelor's degree and a professional degree in five years.

**Cooperative Education** – A program offered by a few schools for combining paid employment with study. Usually, the student alternates one or more semesters of full-time study with semesters of employment.

**Consortium** – Several colleges in an area often join together, giving the student the opportunity to use the facilities and courses of each college.

## NOTES

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