

# THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

## Getting Started: Familiarize Yourself

**'To Do' List for the College Process** (at a Glance)

### **Junior Year**

Spring  
Summer  
Advice for Rising Seniors

### **Senior Year**

Fall  
Spring  
Summer

### **Know The Options:**

Types of:  
Colleges/Universities  
College Degrees  
College Systems

### **Consider Your Priorities:**

Finding 'The Right Fit'

## The College Process: Getting Started Familiarize Yourself

As noted in the preceding grade level timelines, the SI Counseling Department has created a series of steps intended to help you successfully navigate and personalize your college process:

### Junior Year: Fall Semester

#### October

14<sup>th</sup> **PSAT Testing Day.**

#### November/December

Complete the **College Intake Survey** found on Family Connection.

*Fill out the survey with your parents – it is essential to involve them in your college process.*

### Junior Year: Spring Semester

#### January 6<sup>th</sup> First Day of School after Christmas Break

College Intake Survey is due to your counselor. Details may be found on Family Connection.

#### January through March

Schedule an **Individual College Meeting** with your counselor.

The College Intake Survey is required for an appointment. This is a full period meeting meant to begin individualizing your college process. You will have the opportunity to discuss your responses to the survey and collaborate with your counselor to create both an initial college list and your plan for 'next steps' moving forward. **Your college meeting will not take place without your completed survey!**

#### January—June

Register For and Take **Standardized Tests.**

*Test Dates & Registration Deadlines for the '09 –'10 school year are in the Appendix of this guide.*

Start Your **Scholarship Search.**

### College Planning Advice for Juniors:

- **Focus on Spring Semester Grades.** Ask for help if you need it.  
See your teacher, the Academic Support Director, and/or check in with your counselor to make sure you're getting the help you need. We won't know unless you speak up!
- **Start Your Scholarship Search.** A scholarship is a financial award that does not need to be repaid.  
Now is the time to start searching to find awards you may be eligible to apply for. For more information, refer to the Financial Aid/Scholarship section of this handbook.
- **Visit Colleges.** Plan Ahead! Take a Tour!
- **Attend College Representative Meetings at SI.**  
The visit schedule is on Family Connection, announcements, and outside the counseling center door on a Bulletin Board. If you keep your prospective college list updated on Family Connection, you will receive an email reminder for visits from schools on your list.

### Summer: After Junior Year

#### June 15<sup>th</sup>

Complete and Submit the Counselor Questionnaire and the Parent Questionnaire on Family Connection.

These documents allow your counselor to begin crafting your college recommendation before meeting with you in the Fall for a more thorough and personalized review before writing the final draft.

## College Process Timeline

### Advice for Rising Seniors:

- **Complete your Christian Service Requirement.**
- **Review your Transcript.**  
Check your high school grades. Make sure any 'D' or 'F' was remediated. Speak with your counselor if you have any questions.
- **Continue Your Scholarship Search.** See the Financial Aid and Scholarships section of this guide.
- **Visit Colleges.** Plan Ahead! Take a Tour!  
In addition to helping you sort your college options, this exercise will also help fine tune what you're looking for in a college and help to make informed decisions for your final college list.

### Fall: Senior Year

#### September

Schedule a meeting with your counselor. Communication between you and your counselor should be a regular occurrence. Please continue to update your college list on Family Connection.

#### September 15<sup>th</sup>

Senior Meeting Period and Senior Parent Night

Each event gives both Students and Parents an overview of the application process at St. Ignatius.

### Fall Tasks for Seniors

- **Complete College Applications.**  
Stay Organized and on top of your deadlines. Use your college list to create a checklist of requirements for each application. See the Appendix for a sample Application Checklist.
- **Register for and take Standardized Tests.**  
In general, through the December date only. Students applying "early" should consult with the college for details. See the Appendix for the Standardized Test Dates & Registration Deadlines.
- **Send Official Transcripts**  
Remember: UC and CSU do not accept official transcripts as part of the preliminary application process. They may request this information from you later. All student grades are recorded by the student on your application.
- **Send Official Standardized Test Scores**  
As requested by your colleges. (SAT, SAT subject tests &/or ACT scores)
- **Submit Financial Aid Forms**  
As requested by your colleges. (CSS Profile & Individual College Forms).
- **Attend College Representative Meetings at SI.**
- **Complete & Submit Scholarship Applications**  
Aim for submitting all applications at least two weeks before the deadline, if possible.

### Spring Tasks for Seniors

#### After January 1<sup>st</sup>

**Submit FAFSA Online** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)  
See the Financial Aid Section of this handbook for more information.

#### January

#### Send Mid Year (7<sup>th</sup> Semester) Transcripts to Colleges.

Go to [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com) or use your Family Connection account to make the request. Docufide will submit your grades to the colleges you request once they are ready. This typically occurs in late January/early February.

#### January 13<sup>th</sup>

Financial Aid Night for parents (FAFSA review)

#### March—Specific Date To Be Announced

Financial Aid Night for parents: Part II: Understanding the SAR (Student Aid Report)

## The College Process: Getting Started Familiarize Yourself

### **Keep your Counselor Informed About Admission Decisions:** (In-Person and on Family Connection)

As you hear from colleges, please add the admission decision on your Family Connection account. We do like to hear from you in person, too!

If you were waitlisted or denied, it is always a good idea to have a conversation with your counselor about your feelings and whether or not you would like to pursue the waitlist. Your counselor can help support you through the waitlist process.

### **May 1<sup>st</sup>**

#### **• Make a final College Choice**

Please make sure that you to discuss your options with both your parents and your counselor prior to making a final decision. This is especially important if you're struggling with a final choice.

### **May—June 1<sup>st</sup> (before Graduation)**

#### **• Follow Directions Sent By Your College Carefully!**

Review everything you receive from your college as it arrives. This insures that you'll avoid any unnecessary delays or confusion as you plan to transition to your college campus. The deposit, final transcript and the housing request form are all examples.

#### **• Deposit at one college ONLY.**

Please DO NOT send a deposit to more than one college. Doing so prevents students on waitlists from receiving acceptances. It is considered unethical among colleges and high school counselors.

#### **• Inform the 'other colleges'**

Inform the other colleges (that you were accepted to) that you are not attending their college. Call or email the admission office of each college.

#### **• Send a Final Transcript**

Go to [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com) or use the link on your Family Connection account to make the request.

Docufide will submit your grades to the colleges you request once they are ready. This typically occurs in late June.

### **May 18<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Transition to College Night for parents**

Presented by the Director of Counseling at the University of San Francisco, this is an overwhelmingly well received event for parents about to send their seniors off to college. Humor, practical advice and the opportunity for a Q & A session are provided in a casual forum. All are welcome!

### The Basics: Explore the College & University Options

**Liberal Arts College:** A traditional, classical undergraduate college experience that emphasizes the humanities and sciences. The size of the undergraduate population is typically small to medium, and there are usually no graduate programs on campus. Class sizes tend to be small and faculty are interested in engaging students in the learning process. They typically know students well.

**Successful students** at Liberal Arts Colleges thrive in a setting where more attention is provided by professors and those who enjoy having the faculty know them well is considered a plus. There is often a strong sense of community found on a Liberal Arts Campus.

**College Consortium:** A collection of liberal arts colleges in close geographic range with established articulation agreements. Students may take advantage of a wide range of resources available at each campus including cross registration for classes, library access and expanded social horizons. In many ways this is like having the benefits of the University experience in a Liberal Arts college environment.

#### Examples Include:

- The Five College Consortium: Mt. Holyoke, Smith, Hampshire, University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Amherst.
- The Claremont Colleges: Pomona, Claremont McKenna, Scripps, Harvey Mudd and Pitzer.

Successful students are the same as those found in any liberal arts college. The difference is that this student would also enjoy taking advantage of opportunities at other campuses while enjoying the benefits of the community at the college of attendance.

**University:** A broad term for an institution that has two or more colleges (or schools) within it. For example, a university might have a separate College of Business and a College of Arts and Sciences on its campus.

The size of the undergraduate population can range from small to large. There are many different majors and areas of study available which are divided into different colleges. Graduate study and research opportunities are frequent hallmarks of a university education.

**Successful students** are self advocates who are at ease with asking questions and navigating a large campus setting. Such students are comfortable around large numbers of people and appreciate more anonymity among faculty. Class discussions will be more limited. Resources will be significant; universities typically have features like museums, numerous libraries and impressive athletic facilities.

**Professional School:** A college that emphasizes education geared toward entry into a particular profession such as architecture, engineering, technology or nursing.

**Successful students** are typically focused on their career path and seek to prepare themselves to enter that profession in a highly structured manner.

**Music Conservatory/Art College:** A school that specializes in music, fine arts, and performing arts. Generally, two-thirds of course work is dedicated to studio classes and one-third to academic courses. Many schools of this type require an audition (performance based majors) or a portfolio (art based majors) as part of the admission process.

**Successful students** are typically focused on a specific program within the arts. Another form of professional school, conservatory or art colleges will also allow students to delve deeply into the medium of their choice. There may be the opportunity to explore within the realm of fine arts but students should be sure to research the options offered by each college considered.

**U.S. Military Academy** (Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marines):

Students attend Military Academies to educate themselves within a particular branch in the US Military and to gain invaluable leadership training. Degrees are offered in a wide range of majors: Communications, Business, Engineering & other applied sciences, to name a few.

**Successful students** are academically successful and have demonstrated leadership & teamwork at the high school level. Academy education is a full time commitment. It was once mentioned that they “take away your rights and give them back as privileges.” Education is free and graduates of the academy are typically expected to serve for a minimum of five years post graduation and three years of inactive reserve duty.

### **ROTC** (Reserve Officer Training Corps):

Students looking for the benefits of a military education but a more typical college experience should consider participating in an ROTC program at a participating college or university. Offered at over 1000 colleges and universities across the United States, ROTC programs prepare young adults to become officers in the U.S. Military. Each branch of the service (Army, Navy/Marines, Air Force) has an individualized ROTC program that combines academic study with military training.

In exchange for a college education and a guaranteed career after graduation, cadets (students) have committed to serve in the Military after graduation.

**Successful students** are dedicated to military training and service in the reserves and may be called for active duty if the need arises.

**International University:** This type of school is an accredited College or University located outside of the United States. While most of these institutions are affiliated with the country of origin, there are also some American schools such as The American Colleges of Paris and London.

Many students who would like the experience of an international education but not a four year commitment, may also opt to enroll in college here in the United States and choose to take a semester or full year abroad before graduation.

**Successful students** typically enjoy immersing themselves in change including geography, culture, and people.

### **Types of College Degrees**

As you plan to go to college after high school to earn a college diploma, it is important to know some general information about the different types of degrees that are available. This is not an all inclusive list of degree types but it does provide a good starting point.

#### **Associate Degree**

Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees are awarded to students after two years of college work. Community colleges and some four-year universities offer associate degrees. Some students earn an associate degree and then transfer to a four-year college to spend two more years earning a bachelor's degree.

#### **Bachelor's Degree**

The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are the most common degrees awarded to students after four years of college study. There are four year colleges and universities all over the US and abroad that offer students Bachelor's Degrees in a wide variety of fields.

#### **Master's Degree (graduate degree)**

The Master's Degree is earned after the completion of the Bachelor's Degree. It typically takes one to three more years of study in a specific field. M.S. (Master of Science), M.A. (Master of Arts), M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) are each examples of Master's Degrees.

#### **Doctoral Degree**

The Doctoral Degree often signifies the highest level of education earned in a given subject and may either be earned after a Master's or a Bachelor's degree. (PhD) Doctor of Philosophy and (MD) Doctor of Medicine are two examples.

#### **Combined Bachelor's/Graduate Degree (or Joint Degree)**

Students who earn a bachelor's and masters in a joint degree do so in less time than the traditional way: 4-5 years (joint degree) as opposed to 5-6+ years. Depending upon the specific program, students may be required to apply for a joint degree option when applying for the bachelor's program. Other programs may require students to apply for the graduate level during their first three years of undergraduate work, and begin the graduate program in their fourth or fifth year of college. After graduating from a joint degree program, the student would be awarded both a bachelor's and a graduate degree.

#### **Liberal Arts/Career Combination**

In this program of study, also known as the 3-2 Program, you typically complete three years of study in a liberal arts field followed by two years of professional/technical study (for example, engineering). At the end of this study, you're awarded B.A. and B.S. degrees.

#### **Professional Certification**

Some schools award teacher certification to students who complete a bachelor's degree in addition to the requirements of the particular state where the college is located. All colleges that prepare teachers follow the standards for accreditation as set by the particular state. Each state has its own standards for teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels.

## Overview of the College Systems

### University of California (UC)

[www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions)

9 Undergraduate campuses: Berkeley, San Diego, Los Angeles, Davis, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Irvine and Merced.

#### Minimum Requirements to Apply:

Students must meet the criteria in the "UC eligibility index." To be considered eligible, students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA from courses taken in 10th and 11th grade as well as an accompanying minimum test score total (SAT or ACT and 2 SAT subject tests – in different subjects).

### Out of State Public Colleges

Examples:  
[www.oregonstate.edu](http://www.oregonstate.edu)  
[www.asu.edu](http://www.asu.edu)  
[www.colostate.edu](http://www.colostate.edu)

Each State has its own system primarily created to meet the needs of students in that particular state.

#### Minimum Requirements to Apply:

Vary according to each state.

### California State University (CSU)

[www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu)

23 Undergraduate Campuses including San Francisco State, Sonoma State, San Diego State, Chico State. (Campuses vary in size)

#### Minimum Requirements to Apply:

Students must meet the minimum criteria in the "CSU eligibility index" which is based on GPA and SAT or ACT scores. No SAT subject tests are required.

### Private Colleges

CA private colleges:  
[www.AICCUmentor.org](http://www.AICCUmentor.org)

All private colleges have their own websites

There are a wide variety of private school options around the country. Choices depend largely upon personal preference: location, majors, extracurricular options, to name only a few!

#### Minimum Requirements to Apply:

Eligibility depends upon the specific college. Some schools are significantly more selective than others. Typically students are evaluated using the same criteria but their specific requirements are different.

#### Considerations:

GPA  
Courses Taken  
Standardized Test Scores  
Essay(s)  
Extracurricular Activities  
Letters of Recommendation  
Personal History

### California Community Colleges (CCC)

[www.cccco.edu](http://www.cccco.edu)

110 campuses throughout the state of California

#### Minimum Requirements to Apply:

Students with high school diplomas are accepted. Community College can be a good option both financially as well as broadening transfer options. This usually requires a two year commitment-particularly for those who want to transfer to UC/CSU.

### Common Factors Used to Identify 'The Right Fit'

Now that you've had a basic review of the types of colleges out there, you can focus on finding the right fit for you. Start by considering some of the more general criteria involved in the decision making process. A good list has a variety of options which are all potential "first choices." As you consider the various topics below, try to keep specific colleges out of your mind. This exercise shouldn't be about making a list to mirror those colleges listed in US News & World Report or any of the other college rankings, but to find a selection of colleges that meet your personal criteria and are therefore, 'The Right Fit' for you.

#### Geographic Location

Envision all the places you have visited. Where would you like to spend more time? Think about distance from home and what is comfortable for you. Next time you travel (yes, anywhere!) find out what colleges are nearby and stop for a tour just to see what college campuses are like.

Living in a major metropolitan area provides numerous opportunities, but it may lack the quintessential college campus experience. Regardless of your final choice, it is important to look at colleges in a variety of locations: urban, suburban and rural. Each type of campus may be found within the Bay Area.

Give serious consideration to the weather conditions found in different areas of the country. It might sound fun to live in the snow belt of New York (Syracuse University, Cornell) or in the Florida Sunshine (Eckerd College, University of Miami) or even deep in the heart of Texas (Texas A&M, Rice University) and to be honest, it probably is! Before making a decision, make sure you will be all right with the climate found in the area throughout the school year. Believe it or not, it does make a difference for students!

#### Size

How did you feel about the size of SI when you started here as a freshman? Lost in the crowd? Finally able to relax with less attention focused on you? What do you think it would be like to attend a school twice as big? Five times as big? Thirty times as big? Colleges generally fall into three categories: Small (under 2000), Medium (2000-12,000), Large (over 12,000).

#### Majors

A college major is an area of academic study or focus for which a diploma is ultimately received. Students are typically expected to choose a major by the start of junior year.

Imagine arriving at college and discovering that creative writing, your intended major, is not offered at your college! It is essential that you do your research ahead of time to find out if majors/areas of study that interest you are available at the colleges on your list. Start by reflecting on your academic transcript, the results from the Personality Inventory you took on Family Connection (Do What You Are) as well as the career inventory results on your PLAN Score Report. Your counselor is also a good resource to review and discuss your strengths and interests.

Most colleges do not require you to choose a major when you apply, and "undecided" is a perfectly acceptable option as an entering college freshman. 'Undecided' means that you want more time to explore your options before choosing a major. It gives you a chance to take classes in a variety of subjects to discover your true interests.

Before making a decision about what you want to major in, the best way to begin is to consider the subjects you enjoy in high school. Review your transcript: Are you a Strong math student? Good writer? Enjoy languages? After all, college majors should work well with your academic strengths – something you are seriously interested in learning more about. Don't worry about whether a specific major relates directly to a career (unless there's a career out there that you've already selected!). Just get to know you and your options.

By the way, you don't have to major in anything specific to go to medical school, law school or business school! You could be a Philosophy, English, or Physics major (or anything else you can find) and still go on to become a doctor, lawyer, business person – just to name a few careers. Start asking the adults in your life what they do (as a career) and what they majored in. You might also ask where they went to college for more feedback! There are exceptions – nursing and engineering students, in particular, find they are better off starting their major right away because the degree requirements are specific and cannot be substituted by other classes. But if you aren't sure, then don't box yourself in. Start general with your major choice and get specific later on in college!

### Religious Affiliation

Some private colleges have some sort of affiliation with a specific religion. The depth of required religious involvement, if any at all, varies depending on the school.

### Specific Student Populations

- Women's Colleges

Typically among the Liberal Arts colleges, women's colleges were founded to educate women at a time when most colleges were for men only. While there may be men enrolled in courses on campus, women's colleges continue to place their focus on educating women.

Mills, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Agnes Scott, Scripps, Bryn Mawr and Barnard are all examples of women's colleges across the United States.

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)

HBCU were founded to educate persons of color. There are currently 103 HBCU in the United States today. Howard, Morehouse, Clark Atlanta and Spelman are among the 'Historically Black Colleges and Universities' in the United States.

### Special Programs/Activities

Consider the activities you are involved in at SI and whether you envision continuing those in college. What new activities might you want to pursue? (TV/radio production, drama, journalism, social justice?). All colleges want students to become involved on their campus and try to maintain a wide variety of activities.

### Athletic Recruiting

If you are interested in playing sports in college as a recruited athlete, speak with your current coach to help determine your skill level and the reality of playing sports at the college level. Keep your counselor informed to ensure that you have a well rounded college list with a wide range of college options.

It is important to understand that the lifestyle of a college athlete can be very different from a typical college student. Of course, this depends on the athletic division of your sport. Make sure you are aware of the expectations placed by specific colleges on recruited athletes. If you attend a college as a recruited athlete, the expectation is that you will play your sport with the team while in college.

For more information about the general recruiting process, please consult the **Planning Guide for College Bound Student Athletes**, which may be found on the SI website. A link for the **Planning Guide** is also included below: [http://www.siprep.org/counseling/documents/SIStudent-AthletePlanningGuide-numbered\\_003.pdf](http://www.siprep.org/counseling/documents/SIStudent-AthletePlanningGuide-numbered_003.pdf)

### Common Factors Used to Identify 'The Right Fit'

#### Cost

For many students the college process will be the first time the discussion of family finances will occur. Therefore, a conversation about college costs with your parents is an essential factor in this process.

In general, private schools tend to be more expensive, while public schools are generally less pricey. Private colleges may have a strong endowment which may assist in meeting the financial needs of accepted students. If you have questions, contact the colleges to speak directly with a Financial Aid office representative. Every college has qualified financial representatives who can help students and parents understand and navigate college costs. They can also help inform you of the money available to incoming students in the form of scholarships and loans.