



College Admissions Guidebook

Introduction

Greetings from the College Office! We are looking forward to working with you and your family during your time at the Academy. The College Office formally meets with juniors and seniors, but we are happy to meet with you and/or answer your questions at any point in your Academy career.

By design, the College Office seeks to advise, empower, and nurture students in preparation for their transition to higher education. Our goal is to give individualized attention in the navigation of the college admissions process. The success of Academy graduates serves as compelling evidence that the nation's leading colleges and universities recognize both the excellence of the Academy's curriculum and the challenges our students meet in their coursework at Boston University.

Boston University Academy's College Office provides:

- An open door policy for every BUA student,
- Touch points throughout a student's BUA career regarding standardized testing and course selection,
- Regular individual and small group meetings for juniors and seniors to keep them on target during the college search and application process, update them on impending deadlines, and provide workshops relating to the transition to higher education and more broadly – adulthood,
- Feedback and support on college essays, applications, and application credentials
- Extensive resources to help students and parents prepare to make appropriate choices for post-Academy plans,
- Arrangements for college admissions officers to meet with our students in small groups throughout the year,
- Advising and registration for University courses for juniors and seniors,
- Access to information on specific schools, current trends in college admissions, and SAT/ACT test preparation,
- Counseling on various summer plans and extra-curricular opportunities, and
- Regular online newsletter for parents with timely updates about the college search and application process, standardized testing, and the University transition.

We are honored to share in the excitement of your future and hope to provide ample resources to aid you in developing the best plan for what lies ahead. If you have any questions or just want to stop by to say hello, please don't hesitate to come by to Room 202 or contact us at (617) 353-9000.

Sincerely,

Jill Atkinson
Director of College Counseling
jillatk@bu.edu

Ellen Rhodes Evans
Assistant Director of College Counseling
erevans@bu.edu

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The College Process: An Overview

During the last decade, colleges and universities have seen record numbers of students submitting applications to their institutions. The growing culture of consumerism, coupled with increased media attention and value placed on rankings, has made the process more mysterious, confusing, and stressful for students, parents, and institutions of higher learning. With “top” students seeking admission to a limited number of “top” universities that are not increasing the size of their student populations, an entire industry has sprouted to help students find the right match. This guidebook, we hope, will give you concrete information about selective college admissions, help you organize the various components, and de-mystify the process a bit.

If you take nothing else from this guidebook, please know that colleges seek to find students that they think will “fit” their campuses. Although they are evaluating you on your academic record, personal qualities, and experiences in relationship to their community – they are by no means making a judgment on your character or who you are as a person. The most effective college search is one that involves extensive research to identify schools which are a good match for you academically, socially and personally. While reputation and prestige might be important to you, these should NOT be the sole factor in determining where you go to college. You need to carefully understand the nuances of each campus, the school mission, values, academic programs and opportunities, social character, location, size, financial feasibility, and other factors that you deem important. This guidebook, along with your college counselors, advisor, teachers, and parents, will help you figure out where to apply and ultimately enroll.

This guide is organized to help you think about your college search. First, it summarizes how the academic experience at Boston University Academy relates to selective college admissions. Next, the guide explores out-of-the-classroom activities, how they are viewed in the process, and how best to showcase your skills and talents. The third section outlines everything you need to know about standardized testing. The next two portions will cover the development of your college list, the application process, and how decisions are made. Finally, there are sections on financial aid as well as junior and senior year calendars. We hope this will provide tangible information to help you in a fairly complex process.

The Academic Experience

Without a doubt, the most important part of the college admissions process is your academic profile. In most cases, your transcript is the single most important credential when colleges and universities review your application. How you do in your coursework and what academic program you choose to follow directly impacts the admissions process and which schools will think of you as a good match. You will be looked at individually, but also compared to other Academy students and to that university's large and diverse applicant pool. Basically, although you are far more than your academic record, an institution of higher learning's first mission is to educate – thus they want to make sure you can be successful in their academic environment. Your grades and your curriculum are the most valued indicator in that assessment.

Boston University Academy Curriculum

Why do over 70 colleges and universities come to visit the Academy – a high school with typically 45-50 seniors each year – annually? It's quite simple: colleges understand the BUA academic experience and want to enroll Academy students. With popular discussion about racking up AP or IB courses for college entrance flooding the media and included in the conversation with college representatives, many students wonder how the Academy program will be viewed because we don't offer AP courses. Although AP and IB courses are rigorous, college admissions counselors from domestic and international colleges and universities agree that we offer something different and equally – or even more, in some circumstances – compelling. Having a number of undergraduate courses under your belt is impressive to colleges and universities – especially when you have done well in those courses! So take advantage of this opportunity and push yourself, not only here at the Academy, but also at the University. But also be cautious; University professors expect a lot, and your first foray into the University environment can be overwhelming.

In the final two years of an Academy student's career, the University options are virtually limitless. With this privilege, however, comes a great deal of responsibility: responsibility to use free time effectively, attend classes even when a professor may not notice an absence, and make wise choices with regard to curriculum. To state the obvious, University classes are difficult and may pose challenges you do not expect or have not yet experienced. If you turn in work late, skip or arrive late to class, do not do the assigned reading and work, or do not demonstrate the maturity one needs to be successful in a University course, your grade will reflect this.

Just as important, students must be responsible enough to let Academy administrators and University professors know if they are struggling. Through junior and senior meetings, as well as informal one-on-one meetings, students check in frequently with the College Counseling Office. The Assistant Head of School, college counselors, and individual BUA faculty advisors also strive to monitor academic difficulty, attendance, and appropriateness of placement through regular contact with individual professors and department chairs. But it is essential that we hear from you as soon as possible if you feel you are facing difficulties in your University courses.

Because of this exposure to University coursework, alumni tell us that they felt extraordinarily prepared to deal with college, from day one; they already know how to study, meet high expectations, budget their time, approach a professor with questions after class, and make use of

office hours. In the junior and senior years, the support of families, faculty and administrators makes the transition to college courses go a bit more smoothly; when students head off on their own, they typically do not have the adjustment issues that other high school students may face.

Freshman and Sophomore Years

Many parents and educators feel that the first two years of high school should be devoted to having a positive academic experience, building friendships, and exploring new extracurricular activities, with little to no attention paid to the impending college process. However, media hype and increasingly competitive college admission standards are causing students to become anxious about the college process much earlier than in the past. It is BUA's goal to help students and parents find a balance during these first two years of high school between focusing on the Academy experience and being educated about the college process.

The College Counseling Office is a resource for younger students and their parents, particularly surrounding standardized testing, summer program applications, extracurricular activities, and course selection (if needed). Students and parents/guardians should feel welcome to email, call or schedule time to meet individually with the college counselors.

Many students who come to BUA (or any other competitive high school) are shocked to find themselves suddenly a small fish in a big pond. The expectations, workload, and level of academic rigor may seem overwhelming at first. It often takes students half of their first year to find their bearings and understand what teachers expect of them. Typically, students whose grades reflect a struggle during first semester find that hard work and conscientious efforts to improve are rewarded when teachers assign final grades.

One of the most important aspects of your education is the interaction you will have with faculty members. At the Academy, each student is an integral part of the classroom dynamic. Our best piece of advice is this: **if a teacher asks you to meet with him or her to discuss a paper or test, do so!** We know many students are not accustomed to receiving a poor grade or struggling with material, but be assured that it is not a point of shame or failure on your part. Take advantage of the wonderful resource that is our faculty. The ability to approach teachers with questions and concerns, to contribute to classroom discussions, and to continue these dialogues outside of the classroom are all skills that will help you immensely as you continue at the University in the junior and senior years, and as you continue on to college.

It is important for you, the student, to earn the best grades you are capable of throughout your academic career. Many colleges do recognize that the first year at a new high school represents a transition time, and therefore do not emphasize freshman year grades in their review of applications. However, they do appear on your transcript, and they may still be evaluated as part of a college application.

Junior Year

Although every year is important in the college process, the grades appearing during junior year can certainly hold more weight than the previous years; junior year grades, after all, are the final set of complete marks included in an application submitted in the senior year. The expectation is that students challenge themselves appropriately and perhaps even push themselves a bit more during

this year as well as in the senior fall. The BUA curriculum lends itself to this expectation, by introducing University options at this time. Most students will have the opportunity to take two courses per semester at BU in their junior year.

Most frequently, BUA juniors enroll in biology and foreign language at the University. The biology sequence that most students follow is Biology 107 and Biology 108. These courses are taught by BU professors, and the lecture is exclusively for Academy students. The labs, however, are integrated with University students.

Many highly selective colleges recommend that high school students take three years of laboratory science, and that they study both life and physical science. Generally, Academy students who have taken physics and chemistry should plan to take biology junior year. Those wishing to pursue a different path should discuss this option thoroughly with the college counselors.

Boston University offers a wide variety of language options, many that traditional high school students are not able to explore. An important note: if you enjoy your classical language and would like to continue its study, you may do so at the University level. Most universities recognize Latin or Greek as a course that fulfills the foreign language expectations for admission. In addition, many universities find a strong interest in classical studies, language, and literature compelling in the application process.

Because one semester of a college-level course is roughly equivalent to one year of high school level study, Academy graduates can demonstrate a fair amount of mastery in the area of language. The BUA curriculum offers students the opportunity to gain proficiency in both a classical and modern language, which is compelling in the review process. Typically, colleges require successful completion of study through the fourth or sixth semester as part of a distribution requirement during college. Taking Boston University courses also may allow a student to exempt him/herself from a college's foreign language requirement. With this said, many colleges prefer to see students elect to take four full years of foreign language study. If you wish to pursue a different path, you should thoroughly discuss this option with the college counselors.

Senior Year

Senior year allows Academy students the opportunity to individualize their curriculum using the breadth of the Boston University course offerings. For college planning, we recommend students continue to take a balanced curriculum first semester. Because senior thesis is the fifth course for all seniors, one of the five core subjects is dropped. Choose wisely and in conjunction with your future plans and academic interests. For example, if a student who wants to study economics drops math senior year, the admissions committee will likely question his or her preparation for and/or interest in that field as a potential college major. Likewise, a student who plans to pursue a pre-med track should plan to enroll in a science course.

Think about the following when choosing your courses:

- Grades are still very important. Be mindful of your abilities and your past record when choosing your courses. Even one low grade senior year could prove a sticking point for some colleges.

- Students must complete four years of English to graduate from the Academy. Seniors have a number of different options for a course to count as an English course. Any course offered by the BU English Department (including creative writing) may count for this requirement as well non-English language literature courses taught in English translation, and Linguistics courses. Furthermore, the Academy will offer at least one humanities senior seminar that fulfills the requirement. All of these courses count towards graduation requirements, so they will most likely *not* be transferable as “college credit” to the school at which you ultimately enroll.
- Students must complete calculus by the end of their senior year to graduate. Many students who finish calculus prior to senior year want to continue on with math study. Semester-long courses in Integral Calculus and Multivariate Calculus are offered at the Academy, and a number of advanced math courses can be found at BU. Many colleges prefer to see four years of math study regardless of intended major, so please see the college counselors to discuss your options. Students wishing to take a math course at the University should consult with the Assistant Head for Academics, the college counselors and the BUA math department.
- Prospective science majors should consult with the Assistant Head for Academics or the college counselors and Academy math and science faculty to determine an appropriate science course to take senior year.
- Students thinking about following a pre-med track in college should know that medical schools will look at your BU courses in your application, paying particular attention to your math and science performance.

The most important thing to remember entering senior year is that it takes time to adjust to becoming a full time University student. Although the Academy curriculum is rigorous and often as demanding on your intellect as the University, students need to remember that BU professors have very different expectations for their students in terms of attendance, production, number of assessments, grading policies, and extra help. For example, at the Academy, teachers are more apt to bend a deadline if a student is sick; this may not be the case at the University. Overall, students are required to be self-advocates and to demonstrate independence. These skills will be indispensable after graduation from the Academy, but when choosing courses, please be mindful that a class which “looks easy” may not be so easy - not because of the material, but because the instructor has a different style of teaching and learning. The Academy attempts to connect with all University professors teaching Academy students about a student’s progress, but the professors are in no way obligated to tell us if a student is missing class or not understanding the material. It is vital that students be open and honest with parents and the Academy to help assess if we need to intervene.

Senior Thesis

The Senior Thesis is the pinnacle of the academic experience at the Academy. The amount of work required to produce this project is equivalent to any other academic course. Academy teachers will provide a specific structure and benchmarks for students to achieve, and a letter grade will be awarded each semester to assess the student’s progress (the first semester letter grade does get reported to colleges when we send out Mid-Year reports for seniors in mid-January). Students should choose a topic in which they want to invest a significant amount of time exploring. This topic can be grounded in any discipline, but should reflect a student’s potential interest. The thesis offers an opportunity few high school students have to distinguish themselves as true scholars. It is

critical that students be prepared to discuss and highlight their thesis experience throughout the college admissions process, particularly in the interview. Be prepared to send your thesis abstract with applications.

Students will work with one BUA advisor and one outside advisor (usually a BU professor) throughout their senior year as they complete their thesis. From a practical point of view, it is helpful if students choose advisors who have taught them previously, will instruct them during the senior year, or with whom they have worked in a lab. This allows students to see a professor on a regular basis and read materials relevant to their particular area of inquiry.

Applying to Boston University

Boston University Academy students must complete an application and submit all required testing in full if they wish to be considered for admission to BU.

Academy students who apply to BU will be granted admission to most of BU's undergraduate 4-year programs if they meet the following criteria:

- Earn a 3.0 cumulative GPA in academic year University coursework by the time of application
- Have no grade of D or F in any Academy or University course(s)
- Have no reportable disciplinary infraction(s)

Students not meeting these benchmarks may still apply to BU and will still be considered for admission, but they will not have the benefit of knowing whether they will be admitted before April of their senior year.

NOTE: The College of Fine Arts and the 8-year medical program require additional review. Academy students are not eligible to apply for the College of General Studies or Metropolitan College.

Boston University Academy Profile and Transcript

Colleges and universities look at each applicant's academic experience in the context of their academic community and curricular offerings. Although popular media seems to focus on particular curriculums, each high school sends a school profile with each application to better explain the student's academic experience. Our current year profile can be found on the BUA website.

An example of a BUA transcript is included in the Appendix of this Guidebook. BUA does not report class rank or grade point average, and as such, neither appear on the transcript. Likewise, standardized test scores are not included on the BUA transcript; students will report required scores directly from their College Board and/or ACT account to the colleges to which they apply. To distinguish between Academy and University courses, BUA courses are clearly labelled 'Honors' level, while BU courses are marked 'Undergraduate' level. Only final grades appear for semester- or year-long courses; mid-semester and exam grades are not included. NOTE: For seniors applying to colleges, mid-year transcripts sent during the application cycle may include mid-year grades for year-long courses still in progress.

Outside of the Classroom

The college admissions process in the United States is about much more than a combination of academic achievement and standardized test scores. Colleges and universities are looking to bring in a group of students each year that will positively impact their community both in and out of the classroom. While ‘building a class’, many institutions hope that their incoming freshman cohort contains enough students to fill different niches around campus. Unfortunately for the applicant, it is impossible to assess the institutional needs of a college or university which may change from year to year. Although intellectual endeavors are most important, many schools want to know who you are as a person, what interests and skills you will bring to the community, and how you distinguish yourself from other academically excellent applicants.

There is no secret formula for what you “should” do with your free-time. There is no “right” answer, so we do not advise you to join clubs or participate in activities unless you have a genuine interest in them. Colleges can smell a resume building activity from a mile away, and they are truly looking for what motivates you and what you find meaningful. Pursue your interests with gusto. If you love to write, join the newspaper or literary magazine. If you find whales fascinating, maybe a part-time job at the Boston Aquarium is up your alley.

Some students have become specialists in a particular area. As an example, a student interested in environmental studies might choose to take oceanography and environmental science during their senior year, help refine a recycling program at the Academy, do summer programs tagging sea turtles, and write a college essay about a camping experience. By doing this, the student is showing clear commitment and direction and has created a nice theme to the application. This student may seem desirable to some schools because of a clear and distinct passion.

Other students may be seen as generalists. As an example, a student might be undecided about a potential college major but has a passion for science. In school, the student is active with both the Robotics Team and Model United Nations. The student’s senior thesis topic is about a particular poet, and their college essay makes connections between poetry and astronomy. This student’s application highlights many different interests. This student is compelling to colleges for breadth of interest, whereas the first applicant is compelling for a more specific interest. As long as the interests are genuine, both applicants will demonstrate compelling extra-curricular involvement to colleges.

Some applicants will have an activity or other personal quality that will be seen as an admissions ‘hook,’ such as being a recruited athlete, musician, or artist, being a first-generation college student, being published, or being a ‘legacy’ (whose parent(s), sibling(s), or grandparent(s) attended the school.) Not every applicant has an admissions hook, but those who do should try to highlight it and use it to their advantage. Make sure you make the College Counseling Office aware of any potential hooks.

Beyond formal activities, colleges also want to know about your interests and hobbies. Many times, a hobby might turn into a potential major or career. Sometimes an interesting hobby can make you stand out as an applicant. Getting a pilot’s license, building custom surf boards, teaching yourself old English, knitting, photography, baking, collecting beetles – these are examples of activities that showcase a side of your personality that the admissions officers don’t see by traditional standards. Be sure to include them in a resume, an essay, or an interview!

Finally, given the parameters at BU, it would be virtually impossible for you to exhaust the academic offerings, but colleges may be particularly impressed if you take advantage of what BU offers outside of the classroom. Have you attended lectures in your area of interest? Did you go the extra mile with your thesis and do research over the summer? Did you work in a laboratory to assess your interest in chemistry? Colleges recognize that you are privileged to attend a school like BUA and want to know that you have made the most of that opportunity.

Developing a Resume

The Common Application has a section for students to list their extra-curricular activities, employment, awards, hobbies, and service. Completion of this section is mandatory; **a resume may not be submitted as a substitute**. However, some schools may allow a student to upload a copy of their resume, which is beneficial for those students who find the Common Application space insufficient.

Creating a resume can be daunting, so we will help guide students during Junior Meeting. You want to make sure that you pack a lot of information into a small space. Resumes should not be more than two pages long, should include major involvements, and provide a clear and easy way to learn about what you do. They should only include things that you have been involved with in high school. Awards from middle school will not impress a college admissions officer and, in fact, they will most likely detract from your application. The only time pre-college activities should be a part of the application is if you have continued that participation. For example, a student who has been dancing since age 3 and performed in professional shows as young as age 10 can include this fact on the resume if dance is a current activity and if that student is looking to continue to dance while in college. For format advice, please see the college counselors.

Summer Programs, Employment, and Internships – What to do?

Like every other aspect of the college application process, the media has placed a lot of emphasis on summer programs. A multi-million dollar industry has emerged with special summer programs to help build resumes and boost college applications. The idea that these pricey programs are a ticket into prestigious school “x” is extremely misleading. What is most important is that you are doing *something* with your day other than playing video games or lounging by the pool (unless you’re a lifeguard!). Admission officers put these programs into the context of your application. Does it make sense that you spent the summer in Costa Rica tagging sea-turtles or does it look like your parents made you go? When planning your summer, do something that makes sense. A student interested in science may secure a lab job, while another student may scoop ice cream. A student whose parents didn’t go to college may really benefit from a summer program offered at a university. As with all extracurricular endeavors, do something you want to do because you like it – not because it will look good on an application. And oftentimes, an old-fashioned summer job at McDonald’s or Dunkin’ Donuts goes just as far (if not further) with college admission officers as other summer programs.

Feel free to stop by the College Counseling Office for information, talk to your teachers, talk to your friends, and review the bulletin board outside the Office to gather some ideas of what to do over the summer.

Testing

Standardized testing will be part of most students' college application process. More and more colleges are becoming "test-optional" or flexible, which means that for some institutions the testing results don't always matter as much in their admission process as one might think. For more information about schools who are test-optional, please visit www.fairtest.org.

Even if a student wants to apply to a college where reporting scores is "optional," it is still a good idea to take the exams seriously and prepare for them accordingly. There are five types of exams a student can take during his or her time in high school. Not all are recommended, but they are described here in detail. Please note that we strongly encourage all sophomores to take the PSAT in October, we require all juniors take the PSAT in October, *and all juniors should attempt their first SAT in March or ACT in April*. Most colleges require either the SAT and two SAT Subject Tests, or the ACT with writing section.

Below is a timeline of exams a student should **consider** taking. Not all students should take these exams, or in this order. Students should speak with their teachers and the college counselors *prior to registration* to determine the proper testing plan.

Freshman Year: Physics SAT Subject Test in June (not required)

Sophomore Year: PSAT in October (recommended, not required)
Chemistry SAT Subject Test in June (not required)
Latin SAT Subject Test in June (not required)
Math II Subject Test if completed pre-calculus in June (not required)

Junior Year: **PSAT in October (REQUIRED)**
SAT in March for the first time (strongly recommended)
ACT in April for the first time (if preferred)
SAT Subject Tests (especially Literature, Languages, Math II, Biology, US History) in May or June (all students should have two Subject Test scores by end of junior year)

Senior Year: Testing in senior fall should be to meet Subject Test requirements or raise a specific test score
SAT or SAT Subject Tests in August, October and/or November
ACT in September or October (if preferred)
Advanced Placement Exams in May (mostly just Calculus, and not required).

To register for the SAT or SAT Subject Tests, visit www.collegeboard.com. Other important information about registration:

1. When setting up your College Board account, keep track of your user name and password.
2. The BUA CEEB Code is 220202.

3. It is recommended that you fill out the survey since colleges use this information to target applicants. When filling it out, leave your GPA/grade information blank, given the unique nature of our program.
4. Always use the same name and address when registering for these exams.
5. SAT Subject Tests are not offered in March, and Language with Listening Subject Tests are only offered on the November test date.

To create an account and register for the ACT, visit www.act.org.

PSAT/NMSQT

The following is from the College Board Website:

“PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test™. It also gives you [as a high school junior] a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs.

The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are:

- to receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice.
- to see how your performance on a standardized test possibly required for college admission consideration test might compare with that of others applying to college.
- to enter the competition for scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (junior year only).
- to help prepare for the SAT. You can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.
- to receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service.

Sophomores are not required to take the PSAT, but we strongly encourage it. Taking the PSAT in the sophomore year allows the student to become familiar with the format of the standardized test. Many students find that the greatest difficulty they have with testing is budgeting their time efficiently - practicing allows one to focus on the format rather than the substance, knowing there is nothing to lose.

Juniors taking the exam are automatically considered for participation in the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Students scoring in the top 2% of all test takers are recognized as Commended Scholars. Students may also be named as a Semi-Finalist, and be asked to complete an application and essay to be considered as Finalists. The top one-half percent of test takers make it to Finalist status. Commended and Semi-Finalists are typically notified of these designations in September of the senior year.

SAT Reasoning Test

The SAT Test is not offered at the Academy, as we are not a Test Center. Students should register for the test via the College Board website and select a testing site close to home (usually the local public high school).

Most colleges will ‘super score’ the SAT (take the highest Evidence-Based Reading and Writing + Math scores from multiple exams) when determining the score they use to evaluate applications. This allows students to feel comfortable taking the exam more than once without fear of “doing worse.” Though the essay portion is optional, we recommend students opt to take it at least once.

*******Colleges are aware of how many times you take the SAT and those students who take the exam over and over again will raise some eyebrows in the admissions committee. Each time you take the SAT, it becomes a part of your permanent test record.

√ **If required by a college, official standardized test scores must be sent by the student.**

ACT

The ACT is not offered at the Academy, as we are not a Test Center. Students should register for the test via the ACT website and select a testing site close to home (usually the local public high school).

Whether schools ‘super score’ the ACT (take the highest scores from each section over multiple exams) or not varies from school to school. Refer to each college/university admission webpage for specific testing requirements. Though the ACT essay is optional, we recommend student opt to take it each time, in case it is not super scored; some schools do require the essay if the ACT is submitted.

√ **If required by a college, official standardized test scores must be sent by the student.**

SAT Subject Tests

The College Board website explains that:

“SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT II’s) are designed to measure your knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as your ability to apply that knowledge.

Students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science, and language. The tests are independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction. Test content evolves to reflect current trends in high school curricula, but the types of questions change little from year to year.

Many colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, for course placement, and to advise students about course selection. Used in combination with other background information (your high school record, scores from other tests like the SAT Reasoning Test, teacher recommendations, etc.), they

provide a dependable measure of your academic achievement and are a good predictor of future performance.

Some colleges specify the Subject Tests they require for admission or placement; others allow applicants to choose which tests to take.”

All Subject Tests are one-hour, multiple-choice tests. Academy students should plan to take at least two subject tests by the end of the junior year. Students who register should review on their own and take practice tests, as Academy courses do not teach to these exams. Often there is additional information for which students are responsible. The following are possible Subject Tests available for students to take:

Literature – BUA students may take this either junior or senior year. There is not much additional preparation necessary for taking this exam. Students who have been consistently strong English students are encouraged to consider taking this exam. *Offered on every SAT test date except for March.*

US History – BUA students can consider taking this exam June of junior year as they finish the Academy US History course. If you are thinking of taking this exam, we recommend additional preparation, as the exam is more facts and date-oriented than the college-seminar style Academy course. *Offered on every SAT test date except for March.*

World History – We do not recommend taking this exam without considerable amounts of additional preparation on your own. *Offered only in August, December and June.*

Mathematics Level 1 or Level 2 – Most Academy students should be able to take Mathematics 2 after the completion of pre-calculus at BUA, though Math 1 may be a better fit for some. Some selective universities recommend all applicants take Math 2, and it is also a common requirement for engineering, science, and math programs. *Both are offered on every SAT test date except for March.*

Physics – We recommend students take this exam in June of ninth grade. A student should consult with their physics teacher and the college counselors. Most students who have consistently received A’s in physics do well on this exam. *It is offered on every SAT test date except for March.*

Chemistry – As with the Physics exam, we recommend students take this exam with consultation of the chemistry department. Students who have successfully completed chemistry with strong grades should consider taking the Chemistry Subject Test in June of sophomore year. *It is offered on every SAT test date except for March.*

Biology - Students who have done well in Biology at the University are encouraged to consider taking this exam. The College Board says “The **Subject Test in Biology E/M** contains a common core of 60 general-knowledge multiple-choice questions, followed by 20 multiple-choice questions that emphasize either ecological (Biology E) or molecular (Biology M) subject matter.” Before testing begins, you must choose which test you will take, either the ecological or molecular. **Students are not allowed to take both tests in one sitting. If you do, your scores may be canceled.** Academy students who felt more comfortable with first semester of biology should take Biology E and if they felt more comfortable with second semester they should take Biology M. A great deal of extra preparation is required. *It is offered on every SAT test date except for March.*

Languages – The following languages are offered as SAT Subject exams: Chinese with Listening, French, French with Listening, German, German with Listening, Spanish, Spanish with Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Japanese with Listening, and Korean with Listening. We encourage students to take the Latin exam after Latin II or Latin III. Students considering taking an Asian language exam should be warned that many native speakers take these exams and it really alters the scoring practice. (The Subject Tests in Languages with Listening (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish) consist of a listening section and a reading section. Students taking these tests are required to bring an acceptable CD player with earphones to the test center.) *Language with Listening tests are only offered in November. Non-Listening language exam dates vary by subject: French and Spanish are offered five times each year (no November or March option); German, Italian and Modern Hebrew are only offered in June; Latin is offered in December and June.*

Test Preparation

It is important to prepare for standardized exams. Because some students find it difficult to study on their own, the Academy works with Revolution Prep, an outside test prep company, to provide courses during a student’s junior year to prepare for the SAT in March and/or the ACT in April. A mailing goes out to all Academy juniors each fall with details on the fee-based courses. In addition, juniors have the opportunity take free, graded, full-length SAT and/or ACT practice tests at BUA.

Khan Academy offers free online resources for test preparation, as well; for more information, go to the College Board website. BUA also maintains a list of additional test preparation companies, resources and tutors. Please see the college counselors for more information.

Advanced Placement Exams

Boston University Academy does not follow the Advanced Placement curriculum because students are enrolled in Boston University courses. This is a part of the mission and philosophy of the Academy and, as such, our program doesn’t teach to AP exams. Students will hear on college tours that AP courses are “important” for the college process. Our record proves that colleges and universities understand the rigor of our program and many institutions will offer advanced credit for work done at Boston University. The exception to this is the British University system – particularly students interested in Oxford and Cambridge. Both of these schools require students to have a few AP exams under their belt prior to submitting an application.

If students feel they would like to take an AP exam, they should discuss their options and register with the College Office. Typically students who have been successful in MA 90 take the Calculus AB or BC exam. Because Academy students take up to 48 credits worth of Boston University courses, very few take AP exams. A small number of colleges, however, do not accept the college credit Academy students (or any other students) earn while in high school. These schools include Harvard, Columbia, and Williams; other schools may not accept all of the Boston University courses, such as Wellesley, and Colgate, which limit the number of credits with which freshmen may enter. Many accept all the credit Academy students earn through BU – MIT, University of Pennsylvania, Brown, BC, and Emory, for example. For a student who wishes to accelerate his or her time in college, and who ultimately enrolls at a college or university with restrictions on transferring BU credit, taking the AP affords the possibility of doing so.

Developing Your College List

We recommend that students apply to between 5 and 10 colleges. The average number of applications a BUA senior submits hovers around 7 or 8 each year. With over 3,500 colleges in the United States alone, the process of narrowing this list down to between 5-10 schools may seem daunting. Students who develop their list systematically and with research should find applying to college easy, and perhaps even fun! A successful process should involve a lot of self-reflection and open conversations with yourself and your family. In the end we hope that a student has a balanced list of colleges and universities that will leave the student with good choices. A good rule of thumb is to apply to three reach/far reach schools, three possible schools, and three likely/safety schools. Working with your college counselor closely to determine which schools fall into those categories is crucial. Some schools will always be considered a “far reach” because of the sheer number and quality of applicants applying, but one school could be a “likely” to one student and a “reach” to another. Keep in mind that this is a highly personalized process and that the College Office will work with you to determine an appropriate list. After self-reflection, students need to research schools by looking at view books and websites and then ultimately making some trips to campuses. Be very wary of relying solely on *US News and World Report*, *Princeton Review* and the *Fiske Guide*. Although they can be useful, each guide may have hidden agendas and the data may not be as straightforward as it seems.

Naviance

Naviance is the web based software BUA uses to help you in the college process. In January of the junior year, students and their parents/guardians will be granted access to college search engines, college list management, and useful admissions information about each college. In addition, students are able to store documents such as resumes and drafts of essays, keep ongoing journals, and fill out surveys that help inform college counselors about each student’s particular interests/biography. Furthermore, the College Office and faculty manage the administrative functions of the process through the program. It is incredibly important that students keep the information on Naviance up to date and visit the site regularly during second semester junior year and all of senior year.

Self Reflection

Before building a list, students should take a moment to reflect on the type of educational and social experience they want to have in college. This will help develop parameters for the College Office to follow. Below you will see sample student survey questions from Naviance we use to help with this reflection. The major areas to think about are:

- 1) Field of study: undecided, liberal arts, or pre-professional?
- 2) College vs. University?
- 3) Social feel?
- 4) Geography?
- 5) Affordability?

There are no “right answers,” but you need to find schools that are good “fits” in all of those categories that are reach, possible, and likely schools.

Sample Surveys Questions:

Self-Reflection

1. *What are the first three adjectives you would use to describe yourself?*
2. *What would you do if you had a free day?*
3. *What are your favorite three books?*
4. *How would you describe yourself?*
5. *How would your parents describe you?*
6. *What would you do if you won the lottery?*
7. *What is your dream career?*
8. *Describe your family. What is your role?*

Activities/Work

1. *What are your favorite/most meaningful extra-curricular/arts/athletic activities? Why?*
2. *What are your hobbies and other interests?*
3. *What are some activities you do with your family?*
4. *What (if any) jobs have you had during high school (please describe)?*
5. *What (if any) research positions have you had during high school (please describe)?*
6. *What (if any) awards or recognitions have you won during high school?*
7. *What have you done during the summer months during high school (please describe)?*

Academics

1. *How was your transition to high school academically?*
2. *What are your favorite classes so far in high school?*
3. *Describe what sort of post-secondary work are you planning, include potential majors, pre-med/law, liberal arts, engineering etc.*
4. *Do your grades reflect your effort?*
5. *Describe your ideal classroom experience.*
6. *Is there anything you would want to change about your BUA experience? If so please describe.*
7. *What academic achievement are you most proud of and why?*
8. *Are there any outside intellectual interests you have pursued during high school? If so please describe.*

College

1. *Why do you want to go to college?*
2. *How did you come up with this list?*
3. *What are the top three things you are looking for in a college?*
4. *Is prestige an important factor in what colleges you wish to apply?*
5. *Do you feel ready to go to college?*
6. *What are you looking forward to in the college process? What do you fear most about the process?*
7. *Please describe the social atmosphere at your ideal college?*
8. *Please describe the academic atmosphere at your ideal college?*
9. *Would you consider going out of the country for college? If so where?*
10. *What geographic regions would you consider in attending college?*
11. *What size student body would you consider when looking at college?*
12. *What type of environment, rural, suburban, urban (small city), urban (large city)?*

Terminology

There are some terms and concepts with meanings specific to the college search and application process, including financial aid. Here are some we think are particularly helpful, originally edited from the Peterson's College Planner.

Accelerated study — This program allows you to graduate in less time than is usually required. For instance, by taking summer terms and extra courses during the academic year, you could finish a bachelor's degree in three years instead of four.

Admissions decisions:

- **Admit** — You're in! You are being offered admissions to the college to which you applied.
- **Deny** — You are not in. The decision is made by the college or university admissions committee and is forwarded to you and your high school.
- **Wait list** — You are not in yet but have been placed on a waiting list in case an opening becomes available. Schools sometimes rank a wait list, though often times they wait to see what "holes" they have in their freshman class before determining who to admit from the wait list (IF space is available). Sometimes a school might admit students from the waiting list who can erase a gender imbalance, or who have a particular academic or extra-curricular interest. And oftentimes, schools are not able to offer (m)any students who are placed on the waiting list a spot in their class because they meet their enrollment targets through their initial offers of admission.
- **Defer** — You applied Early Decision or Early Action, but a final decision on your file is being postponed until the spring. Usually, this means a college wants to see your first semester grades from senior year, and/or they want an opportunity to reassess your candidacy in the context of their entire applicant pool.

American College Testing (ACT) Program Assessment — An alternative to the SAT, this test has gained wide acceptance by a broad range of institutions in recent years and is given during the school year at test centers. The ACT tests English, mathematics, reading, science reasoning, and writing and offers an optional essay. The composite score is the average of all four tests; the maximum score on each major section is 36; the maximum score for the essay is 12.

Award package — This is the way colleges and universities deliver their news about student eligibility for financial aid or grants. The most common packages include Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and Work Study (see below).

Bachelor's or baccalaureate degree — The degree received after the satisfactory completion of a full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent at a college or university. The Bachelor of Arts (B.A) and the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are the most common baccalaureates.

Branch campus — A campus connected to, or part of, a large institution. Often, a student spends the two years at a branch campus and then completes the baccalaureate degree at the main campus. A branch campus provides a smaller and more intimate setting that may help a student mature personally and academically before moving to a larger and more impersonal environment. A branch

campus experience may be a good idea for a student who wants to remain close to home or for an adult learner who wishes to work and attend college classes on a part-time basis.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) — If admitted to a college, a student does not have to reply until May 1. This allows time for a student to hear from all the colleges to which the student applied before having to make a commitment to any of them. This is especially important because financial aid packages vary from one school to another, and the CRDA allows time to compare packages before deciding. May 1 is a US reply date – students who have applied to schools outside of the US may be expected to make a final decision before that date.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) — When the federal government edited the FAFSA form many years ago, the College Board created this program to assist postsecondary institutions, state scholarship programs, and other organizations in measuring a family’s financial strength and analyzing its ability to contribute to college costs. CSS processes the PROFILE financial form that students may use to apply for nonfederal aid. This form is submitted to some 400 private colleges and universities along with the FAFSA when seeking financial aid from these institutions. Participating colleges and universities indicate whether they require this form.

Common, Coalition and Universal Applications — These college application forms can save students hours of work. The Common Application is presently accepted by over 700 independent colleges; the newer Coalition Application is accepted by over 100 colleges/universities; the Universal is used by about 44 schools. Students complete the information on the standardized form and then submit it to any of the schools listed as accepting it. Some schools also require an additional supplementary application – consisting of school-specific questions and essays. All Academy students are expected to complete the Common Application and share it with the college counselors for editing early in the senior year.

Cooperative education (co-op) — A college program that alternates between periods of full-time study and full-time employment in a related field. Students are paid for their work and gain practical experience in their major, which helps them apply for positions after graduation. It *can* take five years to obtain a baccalaureate degree through a co-op program.

Credit hours — The number of hours per week that courses meet are counted as equivalent credits for financial aid and used to determine you status as a full- or part-time student.

Cross-registration — The practice, through agreements between colleges, of permitting students enrolled at one college or university to enroll in courses at another institution without formally applying for admission to the second institution. This can be an advantage for students in a smaller college who might like to expand options or experience another learning environment.

Defer — the admissions decision is being moved to a later date.

Early Action (EA) — A non-binding application program through which a student applies to a college in the fall of senior year (typically by November), and receives a decision “early” (typically by mid-December). If accepted, the student is not obligated to attend that institution but can bank this admission and still apply to other colleges during the regular admission cycle.

Early admission — Some colleges will admit certain students who have not completed high school, usually exceptional juniors. The students enroll full-time in college and do not complete their senior year of high school. Colleges sometimes award high school diplomas to these students after they have completed a certain number of college-level courses.

Early Decision (ED) — A program through which a student applies to a college in the fall of senior year (typically by November), and receives a BINDING decision “early” (typically by mid-December). The student, a parent/guardian, and guidance counselor all must sign a contract with the school at the time of application that indicates that if accepted, the student is obligated to attend that institution. Some colleges offer two rounds of Early Decision with staggered deadlines. In some cases, there can be a small ‘bump’ in consideration for ED applicants.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) — The amount of financial support a family is expected to contribute toward a child’s college education. This amount is part of the formula used by the federal government to determine financial aid eligibility using the FAFSA form.

Federal Pell Grant Program — This is a federally sponsored and administered program that provides grants based on need to undergraduate students. Congress sets the appropriation each year, with maximum awards currently in the mid-\$5,000 range. This is “free” money because it does not need to be repaid.

Federal Perkins Loan Program — This is a federally run program based on need and administered by a college’s financial aid office. This program offers low-interest loans for undergraduate study. Repayment does not begin until a student graduates.

Federal Stafford Loan — Another federal program based on need that allows a student to borrow money for educational expenses directly from banks and other lending institutions (sometimes from the colleges themselves). These loans may be either subsidized or unsubsidized. Repayment begins six months after a student’s course load drops to less than half-time.

Federal Work-Study Program (FSW) — A federally financed program that arranges for students to combine employment and college study; the employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education or internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) — This is the federal government’s instrument for calculating need-based aid. It is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The form is available in October; students should pay close attention to each school’s financial aid deadline to ensure they are given consideration for any aid for which they are eligible.

Financial aid gapping — The difference between the amount of a financial aid package and the cost of attending a college or university. The student and his/her family are expected to fill the gap through personal funds, loans, outside scholarship, etc.

Grants — These are financial awards that are usually dispensed by the financial aid offices of colleges and universities. The awards may be need- or merit-based. Most are need-based. Merit-based awards may be awarded on the basis of excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability, or special talent, and are only available at certain colleges.

Greek life — This phrase refers to sororities and fraternities. These organizations can have great impact on the campus social life of a college or university.

Honors program — Honors programs offer an enriched, top-quality educational experience that often includes small class size, custom-designed courses, mentoring, enriched individualized learning, hands-on research, and publishing opportunities. A handpicked faculty guides students through the program. Honors programs are a great way to attend a large school that offers enhanced social and recreational opportunities while receiving an Ivy League-like education at a reduced cost.

Independent study — This option allows students to complete some of their credit requirements by studying on their own. A student and his or her faculty adviser agree in advance on the topic and approach of the study program and meet periodically to discuss the student's progress. A final report is handed in for a grade at the end of the term.

Interdisciplinary — Faculty members from several disciplines contribute to the development of the course of study and may co-teach the course.

Internship — This is an experience-based opportunity, most often scheduled during breaks in the academic calendar, whereby a student receives credit for a supervised work experience related to his or her major.

Major/Concentration — The concentration of a number of credit hours in a specific subject. Colleges and universities often specify the number of credits needed to receive a major, the sequence of courses, and the level of course necessary to complete the requirements.

Merit awards, merit-based scholarships — More “free” money, these awards are based on excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability, and other areas determined by the granting organization, which can be a college or university, an organization, or an individual. They are not based on financial need.

Need blind — Admissions decisions made without reference to a student's financial aid request, that is, an applicant's financial need is not known to the committee at the time of decision.

Open admissions — A policy of admission that does not subject applicants to a review of their academic qualifications. Many public junior/community colleges admit students under this guideline, that is, any student with a high school diploma or its equivalent is admitted.

PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test — This test, given in October, duplicates the kinds of questions asked on the SAT but is shorter and does not include the optional essay. Usually taken in the junior year, the test also acts as a qualifying instrument for the National Merit Scholarship Awards Program and is helpful for early college guidance.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) — Each branch of the military sponsors an ROTC program. In exchange for a certain number of years on active duty, students can have their college education paid for up to a certain amount by the armed forces.

Residency requirement — The term has more than one meaning. It can refer to the fact that a college may require a specific number of courses to be taken on campus to receive a degree from the school, or the phrase can mean the time, by law, that is required for a person to reside in the state to be considered eligible for in-state tuition at one of its public colleges or universities.

Retention rate — The number and percentage of students returning for the sophomore year.

Rolling admissions — Though there may be a deadline for application submission, a college's freshman class is filled as applications are read and as admission decisions are read. This concept is used most often by state universities. Responses are received within three to four weeks. If admitted, a student is not required to confirm, in most cases, until May 1. Out-of-state residents applying to state universities should apply as early as possible.

SAT I: Reasoning Test — Also known as “board scores” because the test was developed by the College Board. The SAT consists of two major categories (‘Evidence-Based Reading & Writing’ and ‘Math’) and includes an optional essay. It is given throughout the academic year at test centers. The maximum combined score is 1600; the maximum score for the essay is 12.

SAT II or Subject Tests — These subject-specific exams are given on the same test dates and in the same centers as the SAT I, except for the month of March. More emphasis has been placed on these tests in recent years, not only because they are used for admission purposes, but also for placement and exemption decisions.

Standby — The student has missed a deadline to register for the SAT or SAT II. If a seat becomes available the day of the test, the student will take the test. The student must go to the testing center and wait to see if there is an open seat. A fee is attached to standby.

Waiver to view recommendations — Students sign a form electronically for the Common Application; the Coalition and Universal Applications have similar confidentiality measures. If a student waives their rights to see a recommendation letter (this is STRONGLY encouraged), they may not ask to see their recommendation letter during the application process. Regardless of whether they waive their rights, BUA has a policy of not sharing recommendation letters with students.

Yield — The percentage of accepted students who will enter a college or university in the freshman class; these students have received formal acceptance notices and must respond by May 1 with their intention to enroll. The more competitive the school, the higher the yield percentage.

The Campus Visit

The campus visit is one of the most important aspects of the college admissions process. View-books, websites, and conversations with admissions representatives are good ways to initially learn about the school, but actually stepping foot onto a specific campus is the only way to truly understand the atmosphere, spirit and culture of an institution. Although you may not be able to visit prior to being admitted, the College Counseling Office strongly recommends visiting schools during the spring of your junior year and the summer before senior year. There may be some select Open House programs and interviews to attend in the fall of senior year, but the Academy curriculum does not lend itself well to missing school during senior year. Fall visits should be reserved for second trips, or long distance trips that could only be planned at a specific time.

A secondary purpose to a visit, outside of understanding the particular campus, is called “demonstrated interest.” For many colleges, gauging an applicant’s interest in attending becomes a part of the discussion for the admissions committee. One of the best ways to let a school know you want to attend is to show up, take the tour, and listen to the information session – be sure to fill out an inquiry card in the admissions office! Interviewing is another way to show interest in a school and learn more about its culture and programs.

It is important to plan ahead of time to schedule visits. Follow instructions on each university’s website for reserving a spot on a tour or to participate in a particular program. Some schools welcome “walk-ins,” some only have tours during particular times of day, some only offer information sessions during certain times of year, and some schools have different calendars and may not be holding classes when you think they might be. It is critical to do research ahead of time to maximize the effectiveness of your visits. If, because of time, you are stuck with a choice between an information session and tour – always choose the tour. It is a better way to see more of the campus in a short amount of time. Keep an open mind on any campus tour; your guide is just one student of many attending that institution. If you are interested in classics and your tour guide is a physics major who doesn’t know much about the classics department, don’t get too discouraged – continue to get a sense of the school as you walk around – not just the personality of one guide.

Below you will find a list of schools in “clusters” that can help start you plan visits to schools in close proximity to each other. We recommend that you not attempt to visit more than two schools a day, bring proper attire for walking and inclement weather (not all schools provide umbrellas, but they *will* keep you outside in the rain or snow during a tour).

If you are visiting colleges with your family, it is important to come up with a game plan and communicate this to each other prior to making the visit. Parents should note that it is important (and impressive to Admission Offices) for students to make appointments on their own, sign in at the reception area on their own and take the opportunity to ask their own questions on the tour and info session. Students have different methods of determining if the school is a good fit for them. It is important for parents and students to give each other room to explore the campus from their own vantage point. Parents may ask embarrassing questions, and students may avoid asking questions they don’t see as important. We suggest that each visitor (family member and student) keep a journal and after each visit write down their impressions BEFORE talking with each other about their perspectives. For example, consciously or not, a student might decide she didn’t like a particular school only because her mother stated she was ready to move-in on the tour. By having time to reflect on her own, the student may be able to really articulate why she enjoyed or disliked her visit.

Parents are then able to read as well as listen to their children. Some people have difficulty with free writing, so below you will find a sample evaluation for a campus visit to use during your travels.

During your visit, do the official visit activities, but also plan to spend additional time on each stop. On certain campuses, you may want to schedule an appointment with a particular department, sit in on a class (if possible), sit in the dining hall or student union and talk to current students, or visit other areas of interest not shown on the tour (additional residence halls, art facilities, science labs, athletic fields, radio stations, etc.) The College Counseling Office can also put you in touch with BUA alumni attending various colleges, who might be willing to host you or take you to a class.

Missing University classes requires a lot of planning. Talk to your professors well ahead of time about potential college visits that might require missed class time. Some courses have a limited number of excused absences. College visits may or may not be considered an excused absence, depending on the instructor.

Finally, have fun! This is a great opportunity to see different parts of the country, spend time with your family before leaving for four years and a chance to really see places where you could end up living. Make sure to take time in the evening to see local sites, eat in area restaurants, relax and enjoy. There is no prize for most colleges seen.

CAMPUS VISIT CLUSTERS

Boston Area

Boston University
Northeastern University
Harvard University
Boston College
Brandeis University
Tufts University
MIT
Babson College
Bentley College
Emerson College
Lesley University
Wellesley College
Olin College
Simmons College
Wentworth Institute of Technology
Wheaton College

Western Massachusetts Area

U-Mass Amherst
Smith College
Mount Holyoke
Amherst College
Williams College
Hampshire College

Upstate New York

Skidmore College
Union College
RPI
Syracuse University
Colgate College
Hamilton College
Cornell University
Ithaca College
University of Rochester
Rochester Institute of Technology
Eastman School of Music
Clarkson University

Connecticut/Rhode Island

University of Connecticut – Storrs Campus
Connecticut College
Wesleyan University
Fairfield University
Trinity College
Yale University
Brown University
Providence College
Roger Williams University
University of Rhode Island
Rhode Island School of Design

Worcester Area

Clark University
Holy Cross University
Assumption College
WPI

Vermont/New Hampshire/Maine

Middlebury College
University of Vermont
Bennington College
Champlain College
University of New Hampshire
Dartmouth College
College of the Atlantic
Bates College
Bowdoin College
Colby College

New York City

Barnard College
Columbia University
Cooper Union
The New School
Fordham University
New York University
Pace University
Hofstra University (Long Island)
Stevens Institute of Technology (NJ)
Fairleigh Dickinson University (NJ)
Rutgers University (NJ)
Drew University (NJ)

Philadelphia and Suburbs

University of Delaware
Drexel University
University of Pennsylvania
Temple University
Princeton University
Lehigh University
Lafayette College
Villanova University
Bryn Mawr College
Haverford College
Swarthmore College
Dickinson College
Gettysburg College
Franklin & Marshall College

Muhlenberg College
Ursinus College
St. Joseph's University

Washington DC/Baltimore Area

The George Washington University
Georgetown University
American University
Howard University
The Catholic University of America
University of Maryland – College Park
George Mason University (NoVA)
Johns Hopkins University
St Johns College
Goucher College
Loyola College of Maryland

Virginia/North Carolina

University North Carolina – Chapel Hill
University of Virginia
Duke University
Elon University
Hampton University
Wake Forest University
College of William & Mary
University of Richmond
Washington & Lee University
Davidson College
Guilford College

Ohio/Pittsburgh

Case Western Reserve University
Carnegie Mellon University
Allegheny College
University of Pittsburgh
Denison University
Miami University of Ohio
Ohio Wesleyan University
Kenyon College
Oberlin College
The Ohio State University
College of Wooster
Ohio University

(Continued on next page)

Chicago/Southern Wisconsin

DePaul University
University of Chicago
Northwestern University
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Marquette University
Lake Forest College
Beloit College
Lawrence University
Ripon College
Kalamazoo College

Minnesota/ Iowa/Colorado

Carleton College
Macalester College
St. Olaf College
University of Minnesota – Minneapolis
Grinnell College
Cornell College
University of Iowa
Colorado College
University of Colorado – Boulder
University of Denver
Air Force Academy

Northern California

Stanford University
University of California – Berkeley
University of California – Davis
University of California – Santa Cruz
Santa Clara University

Pacific Northwest

Lewis and Clark College
Reed College
University of Oregon
Willamette University
Evergreen State College
University of Puget Sound
Whitman College
University of Washington – Seattle
University of British Columbia

Atlanta Metro

Emory University
Agnes Scott College
University of Georgia
Georgia Tech
Morehouse College
Clark Atlanta University
Spelman College
Oglethorpe University
Savannah College of Art and Design
Mercer University

Southern California

University of Southern California
University of California – Los Angeles
University of California – San Diego
University of California – Santa Barbara
Loyola Marymount University
University of San Diego
Chapman University
Claremont Colleges (Claremont McKenna,
Harvey Mudd, Pitzer, Pomona & Scripps)
Occidental College
Pepperdine University
California Institute of Technology (CalTech)
Whittier College
University of Redlands

CAMPUS VISIT EVALUATION

Name of College: _____ Date of Visit: _____

Activities (circle): Campus Tour - Info Session - Classroom Visit - Open House - Overnight - Other

Names of People to Remember (admissions rep, tour guide etc.): _____

What is your first impression of the school? Be descriptive. _____

What is the mission of the school? How is different from other schools? What is it most proud of?

Comment on the Academic programs, curriculum, and intellectual life. _____

If asked why you might apply here, what might you say? _____

What is your impression of the physical appearance of the campus and facilities? _____

Describe the students you met during your visit. Do they seem to be happy? Do you see yourself wanting to be friends with them? Would you fit into the community? _____

Comment on extra-curricular life on campus. Are there any special clubs, athletic teams, arts programs that seem to spark your interest? _____

How is the quality of life? (Residence Halls, Dining, social outlets). _____

What do students do when they graduate? How is job placement, graduate school acceptance, career counseling? _____

How are my chances of being admitted? _____

Are there any plans for changes on campus, in the programs, etc.? _____

High School Visits

Every fall, many universities, colleges, summer and gap year programs visit the Academy in the hopes of recruiting applicants. These “high school visits” provide a small meeting in which the representative from the school can meet with interested students. Each college has a different approach and style to these sessions, but overall this is a tremendous opportunity to interface with a person who is most likely going to be reading your application. This is also an opportunity to demonstrate interest in a particular college. Because the Academy is so small, representatives often take advantage of these meetings as a time to get to know students as individuals. It is common for them to remember a student’s questions during these meetings when reviewing an application later in the winter. Students are *not* allowed to miss an academic commitment to meet with visiting college representatives, rather students should check in with the college counselors a few days before a visit to make known any conflicts. The college counselors will advise on appropriate steps. The following schools are frequent visitors to BUA each fall:

Amherst College, Bard College, Barnard College, Bennington College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Brown University, Carleton College, Carnegie Mellon University, Case Western Reserve University, Champlain College, Colorado College, Columbia University, Connecticut College, Franklin & Marshall College, Goucher College, Grinnell College, Hamilton College, Harvey Mudd College, Haverford College, Johns Hopkins University, Kenyon College, Macalester College, MIT, Mercer University, Middlebury College, Mount Holyoke College, New York University, Northeastern University, Oberlin College, Occidental College, Pitzer College, Pomona College, Princeton University, Quest University, Reed College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Skidmore College, Smith College, Swarthmore College, Syracuse University, Trinity College, Trinity College Dublin, Tufts University, Union College, University of Chicago, University of Connecticut, University of Massachusetts – Amherst, University of Miami (FL), University of Richmond, University of Rochester, University of Southern California, Vanderbilt University, Vassar College, Washington University in St. Louis, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Wesleyan University, Wheaton College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

The Final List

By the end of junior year, you should have a working list of about 10-20 schools. Nothing is set in stone and your list can be completely different as you do research and visit over the summer. We will do our best to help you narrow the list to between 5-10 schools that will leave you with options at the end of the process. By April of senior year, we want you to have some choices. Where you are in September might be completely different when April rolls around. Having a balanced and diverse list will keep you from being stuck in the end. For most students, we will encourage you to apply to Boston University because of our special relationship.

The Application Process

Once you come up with your final list of schools you will complete and submit applications. Application instructions can be found on a college's website. Many colleges and universities in the U.S. use the Common Application, so the process can be started as early as August 1st (when the Common App goes live). Very important to note is if the college requires supplemental information, this will be noted on the Common Application website as well as on the college website. Please print out and proofread everything you plan to send online. The college counselors will also help proof your applications and essays before you submit them.

Many college admission offices operate under the following model: applications are broken down by territory. Admission officers are assigned to certain territories, and are responsible for visiting high schools, interviewing, and serving as the primary reader for applicants from that area. The officer also is responsible for getting to know which high schools have unusual grading systems, curricular components or offerings. He or she can then present this relevant information when a committee is reviewing applications. At some institutions, this representative may be the key individual making the decision about a candidate's application, thus why it is so important for you to attend the high school visit at BUA; it is an opportunity to let the person reading your application put your face (and engaging personality) with your name.

Some admission offices, such as large state schools, may use a formula to determine admissibility. This formula is typically based on SAT scores, rigor of curriculum, and grades. Other factors, such as athletic/artistic talent, or legacy status, may impact the equation as well. It is recommended that BUA students meet with us to discuss steps one can take to assure that these admission offices make a fair assessment of their application.

Most applications have five primary components: the transcript (always the most important); standardized testing; letters of recommendation; one or more essays; and extra-curricular components.

Each college assesses applications in a slightly different way. Some colleges may have a first reader make a recommendation to admit, waitlist, or deny; if the second reader agrees, the decision is final. If they disagree, a third and more senior officer might render yet another opinion. Other colleges might have readers give an applicant three ratings: one personal, one academic, and one extracurricular. If the application is given the highest rating in each area, say 10 out of 10, that may be a clear admit; if the application is below a certain number, it may be a clear denial or cause for further discussion on the applicant's credentials. Still others may have one primary reader who then presents the strongest applications to an entire admission committee, which must then come to consensus.

Academic Transcript

The first thing colleges look at when reviewing an application is the transcript. Please review the section on "The Academic Experience" for more information on how this area of the application is evaluated in detail. In summary, schools see the strongest grades in the strongest curriculum as most desirable. Each school's definition of "strong" is different, so speak to the college counselors to learn about the typical profile of a student admitted to that school.

Honors and Awards

Admission offices will take into account any academic or community awards and honors you have received. Awards relating to the Academy will be listed on your transcript. All others you should list on the Common Application or other college applications.

Personal Statement and Supplemental Essays

The “Personal Statement,” otherwise known as “the college essay” is one of the most important aspects of the admissions process, particularly for highly selective institutions where it can be used to distinguish between many qualified candidates. It is the only aspect of the application where you can use your own voice. Take the opportunity to expand on something already highlighted in your application, a particular activity or interest, or to share something that is not already apparent in the application. Most importantly, show your skills as a writer. This is not an academic paper, so you do not need to follow a particular style or formula. Because of the weight that the essay carries, it is critical to start the process early when you have the leisure to try different topics and find your voice. Most first attempts change as you get more comfortable with this genre of writing.

The admissions staff will use this piece of writing in a variety of ways. They read the essay to assess basic writing skills, including grammar and stylistic eloquence, to evaluate your ability to respond to a prompt in a clear and cohesive manner, and to assess your creativity, depth and ability to convey personal thoughts and beliefs. For this reason, it is extremely important that your essays represent your own work, **not** that of parents, teachers, counselors or professional writers.

*******We cannot stress strongly enough that parents should *not* be involved in the essay writing process. It is very noticeable when the student steps out of his or her own seventeen year-old voice, using a phrase or expressing a sentiment that seems out of place or forced. ***Admissions officers read thousands of essays; you can be sure that they spot outside help, whether it is from a parent or professional copy editor. All college essays MUST be clearly written by the student – any potential indication that a parent has played a heavy hand in “helping” the student with the essay will work against a student’s application.*** In the end, it is important that the essay reflect the student’s voice.

Prior to the start of senior year, we ask that you present the college counselors with a draft of your personal statement. Current essay prompts for the Common Application can be found at www.commonapp.org.

The essay prompts are typically reviewed each year and sometimes revised. Most students struggle with how to begin. Take a moment to brainstorm what you want the admissions office to know about you outside of the other application materials. Once you come up with those qualities, are there any experiences or moments in your life that illustrate those qualities? Some of the best essays are about quiet moments in life where a simple connection is made or a small idea that “explodes” into something that gives insight into the author’s inner workings. You don’t have to try to be profound, but you do want to leave the reader with the feeling that they have learned something about you.

Here are a number of tips regarding the essay that we believe can help you craft a strong personal statement.

1) Be your BEST self.

Put your best foot forward. Your personal statement should be truthful, but sometimes it is not what you say but how you say it that makes an impact.

2) Make connections.

Great personal statements show that you have intellectual interests that can move you (and the reader). Choose a topic that excites you and, most likely, the energy surrounding your interest will be conveyed in words and might even be inspiring. Showcasing original thought or an original idea is huge when writing your essay. The goal of a university is to create new knowledge through discourse and research; having an essay that shows you are capable of contributing to that type of community is key.

3) Show what you can contribute.

Colleges read hundreds of essays about baseball games, finishing the yearbook on time, and student council elections. Most times the author saves the day or learns something valuable from failure. Essays that focus on leadership can be tricky and may contain clichés and “Hallmark Card” endings. However, colleges want to know how you will contribute to campus. Describing one moment and allowing the experience to showcase your leadership is far more effective than listing your achievements (which are already listed in the ‘Activities’ section of your application) or taking about how great it was to win an election or an award.

4) Show empathy.

There is nothing worse than coming across as a threat to a community in your personal statement. A competitive nature is good, but certain ways of describing it within you can raise red flags for admissions officers. If there is a remote chance that a student seems to be a person who will sabotage a lab project or be a nuisance in a residence hall, you can bet they will not be admitted. Use your essay to show your maturity and ability to have empathy in others. Be cautious about writing about social issues that may be controversial. Writing about how homeless people should just get jobs will not win over the hearts and minds of an admissions officer, for example.

5) Show independence.

When you attend college, your parents will not be joining you. In your personal statement, you should come across as someone who is ready to be on your own. Writing an essay about how your parent is the most influential person in your life may seem like a way to honor your parent, but it could signal to an admissions officer that you are not ready to let go.

6) Show resilience & have perspective.

Many people think that the only way to get into college is to write about overcoming a great obstacle. If you have faced hardship, writing about it in a way that shows you have resilience and strong character can be a very successful approach. Conversely, taking a “poor me” approach can be disastrous. If your family background, personal history or health has greatly shaped who you are today, there is probably an essay in there. Perspective is everything. If you have led a good life, be happy about that and choose a topic that is about you. Creating drama out of nothing doesn’t make you interesting; rather, it makes you seem like someone who will not contribute to the community in a positive way.

7) Answer the question being asked of you.

It’s remarkably how often students forget to answer the actual question or respond to a given prompt!

You obviously cannot do all of these things in one essay, but a good personal statement will hopefully achieve some/many of these goals. Above all, your writing style, grammar, spelling and sentence variety, and word choice is critical in writing a strong personal statement. The best topic can be ruined if the essay is poorly written.

Topics to Avoid

Most (not all) childhood stories
Community service projects
Grandparents, siblings, parents
Girlfriends, boyfriends
Babysitting
Childhood career goals (I wanted to be an engineer when I discovered Legos...)
My trip to Costa Rica...
The essay writing process
Drama at camp
Losing an election or not getting an award
Divorced parents
Being really busy or overworked
“The big game” or “the big concert”
Drugs and alcohol
Sexual experiences

If you are having trouble with starting your essay, you can come to the College Counseling Office to read some actual essays. In addition, we encourage you to visit college admission websites with examples of particularly effective essays they have received; Connecticut College and Johns Hopkins University typically post ‘Essays That Worked’ after each admission cycle.

Sample Questions

In addition to the Common Application, many schools will ask you supplemental or Common Application ‘member’ questions. Below, you will see a handful of popular ones used in the past. The most common supplemental question is “why do you want to attend?” When answering be very specific, and show you have done your research on that school. Avoid regurgitating the university’s homepage or the admissions office’s information session. Dig deeper, and think about your interests and why you actually want to go to a particular school. Most importantly, if you mention a school’s name in your essay, make sure to change it if you are using the essay for other school’s questions.

Relate a personal experience that reveals something about you to your future college roommate. (Stanford University)

Life has its fair share of duties and responsibilities that we meet with muted enthusiasm. But then there are ideas, pursuits, etc., that inspire genuine passion. What in your life generates such passion? (Occidental College)

The modern world has lost all its heroes. Do you agree or disagree? Please tell us why. (Wellesley College)

You have just completed your 300-page autobiography. Please submit page 217. (University of Pennsylvania)

Write a haiku, limerick, or short poem that best represents you (New York University)

In an essay of no more than 500 words, please select three words that describe you best and tell us how you will use these qualities/characteristics to contribute fully to the BU community (Boston University)

Outside your family, who has been your greatest teacher? How and what did he or she teach you? Give us an idea of this person’s qualities and talents and tell us what made him or her worthy of emulation. Be sure to include specifics regarding your interaction with this person, giving us as complete a picture as possible. A character sketch is fine, but a short narrative or other essay style is also appropriate. Saintliness is not necessarily a prerequisite; it could be a person who showed you what **not** to do. (Amherst College)

Describe a risk that you have taken and discuss its impact on your life. (Skidmore College)

Sample Essays

Below are a few essays that Academy students have written. Use them as examples of “essays that worked.”

Prokne

For six weeks this summer, I was a participant in the Summer Science Program (SSP). My goal during this time was to determine the orbit of the asteroid 194 Prokne. During the day, I attended lectures on physics, astronomy, and computer programming; late at night, I took observations of my asteroid to get data. But during the evening, when I wasn't doing homework or poring over astronomical charts in hopes of figuring out which bright speck on a photographic slide was my asteroid, I did something that, at least on the surface, was completely unrelated to astrophysics. I read poetry.

I brought with me to SSP a dozen books of and about the poetry of T. S. Eliot as preliminary reading for the senior thesis I am writing over the course of the school year. This greatly amused my fellow participants, as we had been warned in advance that we would not have time to read or do schoolwork during the program, and I gained a kind of notoriety for bringing so many books. Quite apart from the Eliot books, I was the one who bought books to read for pleasure during weekly trips into the nearby town of Ojai, I was the one whose parents sent me an issue of *The Economist* each week, and I was the one who pre-ordered the final Harry Potter book.

Around the beginning of the second week, I was rereading “The Waste Land” and some explanatory notes about it. I read lines 97-100 (“Above the antique mantel was displayed/ As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene/ The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king/ So rudely forced...”). The note to these lines recounted the Greek myth of Philomel, who was turned into the first mockingbird after being raped by her sister's husband, Tereus. I vaguely recalled this myth, but had not known of Philomel's sister, who in the myth was turned into the first swallow (a fact referenced by Eliot later in his poem). Her name, I discovered, was rendered as either Procne or Prokne. I read the note again. Yes, it still said Prokne. Here was a fact about my asteroid I could not have learned with a telescope, no matter how many slides I developed at three in the morning.

My reading was not supposed to be related to what I was doing at SSP. Indeed, escaping the world of equations and numbers for an hour to do something unrelated came sometimes as a great relief. But, by some coincidence, a point of contact had appeared between my two then-parallel lives: that of the scientist and that of the poet. Just as in this instance poetry and astronomy produced a quiet and unexpected revelation of their relatedness, I believe that the most profound knowledge of the intellectual landscape comes from the intersection of different disciplines.

At SSP, I found myself among people who, while they all shared a commitment to scientific learning, relished the chance to explore additional areas of knowledge. I shared my issues of *The Economist* with Daksha, a fellow participant from Singapore, and discussed Belgium's impending breakup with Gabe, who was experiencing it firsthand. With others of my age, I played soccer and Frisbee and threw the boomerang, though we were unable to resist discussing the physics of the latter activity. I played at least a dozen late-night games of Risk and won a few. And yes, I even played some Dungeons and Dragons.

In the end, one chooses to go to college to learn. But what is learned need not be limited to a specific area, or even to realms entirely within the academic sphere. We attend college so that we may benefit from the inspired ideas and unexpected connections of others in addition to our own. In college, ideally, poetry and astronomy, *The Waste Land* and Prokne, encounter each other every day—and they are enriched by their association.

Personal Statement

My cousins have a small cottage on the shore of Lake Androsscoggin in Maine, the most appealing part of which is not the cottage at all but the mooring in the lake behind it. The boat moored there is an antique Lightning, a gorgeous, seventeen foot wooden boat, under whose sails I have been exploring the lake for as long as I can remember.

Every summer, until I was thirteen, my mother would drive half the distance to Maine and unload me upon my Aunt Sue and Cousin Sarah. I would then spend the next week swimming, playing **Sorry!** and attempting to spend as much time as possible out sailing. In the afternoons, when the wind picked up, we all would swim out to the mooring, and climb (or be hoisted by my uncle) into the Lightning to sail out across the lake. The most exciting part of these expeditions was not the physical experience of sailing, the speed and the exhilaration of being trusted to help on the boat. Rather, my favorite part was when my cousins and I would beg my uncle for stories and he would oblige us with tales from ancient mythology. Our particular favorites were myths of the brave Odysseus' return home from the Trojan War, in which he vanquished the Cyclops and escaped his cavern under the bellies of his sheep or rescued his men from the evil sorceress who turned them into pigs. Summer after summer I would return, and although I grew and slowly moved from tending the jib to trimming the mainsail and wielding the tiller, I never tired of my uncle's stories. Long after we had left the boat, Sarah and I would ask for bedtime myths and tell each other our favorites while embellishing them with personal details. It turns out that Polyphemus the Cyclops kept pink magical sheep. Who would have guessed?

Years later, after Sarah had lost interest in sailing, her brothers had left for college, and I had become the only one in the Lightning with Uncle John on those warm Maine afternoons, I recognized my beloved myths in English class, when we read Homer. Everything started to fall into place. The sorceress who turned the men to pigs was Circe, and Odysseus had stayed on her island for another year, drinking and carousing, details my younger self had missed. Suddenly, I had a beginning and an end to Odysseus's journey, something I'd missed out in the lake, where I had instead settled for serendipitous moments along his voyage, much like my own moments leaning off the side of the boat, lines in hand as we sped away from the shore. I escaped the rest of my life to simply exist in the moment, as Odysseus had only existed for me in moments along his way rather than the comprehensive tale I would read later. I carry these moments with me, both to English class, and to sailing practice, where we raced another variety of boat, the Cape Cod Mercury. And when my crew bounced up and down on the bow, trying to make me more comfortable with skippering under race conditions, or I opened my copy of the Odyssey, I would think back to my own sunny afternoons spent clambering onto the bow of the lightning and setting out for the wind, waves, and Homeric epic, and I would breathe deeply, and remember what it felt like to just be me.

"Middlebury values a sense of place and community in all forms. Please tell us about where you have grown up. How has it influenced you and your vision about the kind of college community you would like to join next year?"

Belmont, Massachusetts, is tiny. That's really the only way I can describe it. It has about 28,000 people, one high school, and no conceivable reason to visit. If you're in a car, you can literally drive from one side to the other in five minutes. Knowing this, you might think of some picturesque little country town near New Hampshire, where there are horses and pick-your-own apple farms. A hundred years ago, you would have been spot on, but today all of Belmont's farms and horses have been absorbed by the creeping specter that we call Suburbia. To be fair, there is one farm that's still clinging to life, but it's smaller than my own backyard, and the farmer is in his eighties. Everything else is paved over, crime-free, and uninteresting—even more so than Boston's other suburbs, because it's so small. We're the kind of town so starved for news that the town paper will put middle-school musicals and tips on dealing with coyotes on their front page. Mitt Romney ostensibly lives here, but I've never so much as caught a glimpse of his extremely well-oiled hair. This October, Dane Cook shot part of a movie in Belmont Center. My sister and her friends sat nursing Starbucks' cups in the cold night for hours, desperately hoping they could see Kate Hudson. Instead, they managed to watch about 30 seconds of Dane Cook's profile. That's what Belmont is like; you wish you could have Kate Hudson, but really, all you're going to get is the side of Dane Cook's head.

A lot of people move to the suburbs for the school system, and Belmont's is actually incredibly good. Located two minutes from my house and right next to our cadmium-filled local pond, Belmont High School is not, in fact, the school I attend; I go to a school right in the middle of the Boston University campus, and I'm happy there. At Belmont High, bake sales are banned because of the possibility of peanut allergies. Walking around BUA I've seen choirs of Mennonites, people handing out gum in giant watermelon costumes, Jews for Jesus, and a man holding a bullhorn who informed me that Al Gore only wanted to save the baby seals because they were white. I don't regret going to school in Boston at all—it's one of the best choices I've made in my whole life—but being there has also made me realize what I love about Belmont.

To a visitor, Belmont seems just like any other boring suburban town, but this is the place where I grew up and became myself, and I love it. Belmont's school curriculum, in all honesty, can't compare with BUA's, but it was Belmont that made me fall in love with Latin and English. It was because of Belmont's music program that I realized, after trying and miserably failing to play the violin, viola, and flute, that I loved to sing. Belmont's public library was my refuge, a warm place in the winter and a cool place in the summer, where I could get a stack of books, curl up on a hard wooden chair, and just read. It's not such a small town that I know everybody, but it is the sort of place where people who you don't even know will smile at you and wish you a nice day as you pass on the streets. I know everybody in my neighborhood, and they know me—often, I've gone to school with them, babysat their kids or been babysat by their kids, cut through their yards, taken care of their cats when they were away, borrowed sugar from them when my mom was cooking. Technically, I live on Stone Road, but right across from my house is Orchard Circle, a huge circle of land large enough to hold a house in its own right. We just call it the circle, and it's the epicenter of all community activity. Every summer we have cook-outs in the circle; every winter, the little kids build snow forts and have epic battles, then they trek back to someone's house to defrost with hot chocolate. I was one of them once; I still remember the day when we built a snowman eight feet tall. His eyes were grapefruits and his buttons gigantic cookies, and he dwarfed the sombrero that we had somehow dropped onto his head. I called him Pepe.

Memories like these are what formed my childhood and made me who I am, and they've also given me some idea of what I want in the future. The reason why I'm so glad I went to BUA because it has the small size and the same sense of closeness and community. When I go to college, I obviously want to go somewhere where I can get a great education, but I also want to go to a college where I can feel like a part of something. I want to be part of the community, to know the people I pass on the streets, to care about the place I'm at. I've been at a big city university already, and I've taken classes there—it's a great place for some people, but I know that it's not for me. Small size, closeness, community—that's what I'm looking for in a college, and that's why I'm applying to Middlebury. From what I've seen, it's got everything I just described, it's beautiful, and it's way less boring than the side of Dane Cook's head.

Personal Statement

First the clicking as the system turns on; then the sucking as the machine starts to breathe. Pretty soon the clear tubes turn white and the smell of fresh cream mixes with the ever-present aromas of sweet hay and cow pie. The cats and dogs gather in the barn, hoping for a taste. Before heading to the milk-room, the Milker always indulges them, filling a yogurt container full of milk for them to share. How I wish I could partake and fill my glass with rich, warm milk just minutes removed from the cow. Yet instead I must go inside to the kitchen and pour myself a cup of pasteurized, homogenized milk with vitamins A and D added. Who would have thought that the white medicine my parents forced me to down twice a day could actually smell so good?

I have been going to this summer camp on a dairy farm since I was ten. It is an organic dairy farm, so the garden is fed with compost and the animals with organic vegetarian feed. The people, too, are fed with the best quality, healthy organic foods. For breakfast the tables are lined with snow-white bottles of milk—milk that may have come from one of these cows a very long time ago.

Being on a farm, there is the option for campers to sleep in until 7:00am or get up at 6:15am to do chores. In the seven years I have gone to that farm, I don't think I have ever missed a chores morning. The most coveted chore on the farm is feeding the calves. It is exciting to watch them squeal over the calf-milk replacer they are usually given. I enjoy feeding the calves, too, but it is so much more fun when we bring them the real thing. They definitely know when they are getting milk, or just a milk replacement. I set their little buckets of steaming milk down just inside their pen. Then I longingly look on as they fight amongst themselves for the best buckets, usually toppling them over in the process.

Several times I asked the farmers to taste the milk they so generously give to the calves. They always told me the same thing: they are not yet certified to sell raw milk. So every day I would watch the farmers go to the fridge in the barn and pull out a glass of truly fresh milk. Every day I would ask for a taste. Every day I was denied. I was hopeful that on the last day of camp I would finally get my wish. I did chores happily that morning, almost expectantly, because I had the idea that my last day of camp would end with a warm glass of milk. No milk ever came my way. I went to breakfast when the bell rang and had my cereal with the pasteurized stuff.

Then, right before community meeting, the Milker beckoned me into the barn. There, on the counter in the milk room, was that cup of milk I had been dreaming about all morning. Everyone had gone, the Milker told me. I was supposed to be helping him with a calf. No one would see what I was about to do.

It is so hard to explain raw milk to someone who has never tasted it. The milk and cream are still separated, but mixed together at the same time. It's like drinking cream, but better. Cream is still processed. This stuff isn't. The texture is different, the flavor is different. It still is hard for me to believe that the "milk" I had with my breakfast that morning was somehow even related to my after-breakfast snack. I now fully understand why the calves get so excited about real milk. It really is nothing like calf-milk replacer. Nor, for that matter, is it like the human-milk replacer that sometimes comes in Hood's light-block bottle, but usually in a plastic carton, homogenized, pasteurized, and with vitamins A and D added.

Extracurricular Involvement

Please review the section “Outside the Classroom” for a more detailed look at how colleges view extra-curricular involvement and developing your resume. In summary, admissions officers look to learn more about who you are through what you do with your free time. Admission officers are essentially looking at three things:

- 1) Your talent level (how good are you at what you do?)
- 2) Your leadership (captain of a team, editor of a publication, lead in a theater production, etc..)
- 3) Your commitment (how dedicated you have been to an activity over time)

Letters of Recommendations

College applications typically require three letters of recommendation: a school recommendation, and two teacher recommendations. The school recommendation is written by the College Counseling Office and offers a summary of your overall experience in high school. The goal is to create a composite picture of who the applicant is in the context of the Academy and as a human being, highlighting personal qualities, anecdotes, and other information. To help your college counselor in this process, it is important to fill out and update your survey on Naviance, completely and honestly, in addition to meeting with your counselor regularly.

Teacher recommendations address primarily your performance in the classroom. Teachers are asked to evaluate your written and oral communication skills, motivation level, and contributions to classroom discussion. While the recommendation focuses on your achievements in the classroom, it adds a nice layer if you choose a teacher who has also supervised you in an activity or one with whom you frequently spend time. You need not ask the teacher in whose class you earned the highest grade; sometimes a teacher who has witnessed your willingness to put in extra effort and ask for help can better speak to your strengths as a student. The college counselors will help you identify which two teachers may be your strongest advocates.

Students should choose two Academy teachers by the end of their junior year to write their letters of recommendation. BU professors will make wonderful “additional” recommendations IF a school welcomes extra letters of recommendation (*many schools actively request that students not send extra recommendations*). It is also nice to send a thank you note to your teacher for spending this extra time writing for you.

To Waive or Not to Waive?

A letter of recommendation is meant to be a candid assessment. Most recommendation forms ask you whether or not you wish to waive rights of access to the form, should you enroll at the institution. Some teachers will choose not to write if you do not waive your rights of access. They don’t want to write negative things about you; they simply feel more comfortable knowing that they are writing a confidential letter. If you do not waive your rights of access, a college admission office may also wonder about why you have elected to do so – do you have something to hide? Are you worried about what your teachers will write? If you are uncomfortable with what a teacher or counselor might write, talk to him or her. Provide them with as much information as possible, and offer to answer any questions they might have. You are strongly urged to waive your rights of access.

Additional Letters of Recommendation

Generally, we discourage additional letters of recommendation because many colleges discourage them. With significant jumps in the size of application pools, and little to no increase in staffing, admission offices are at full reading capacity, and extra letters of recommendation may be ignored. There are exceptional circumstances though that might elicit an extra recommendation; please see the college counselors to discuss whether your situation merits such a letter.

If you have a particular talent or you have had an internship or work experience in a field of interest, you may wish to have someone who is familiar with your talents in this area write an additional letter of recommendation. If you do so, please have your recommender send an additional copy of his or her letter to the College Counseling Office; in many cases, we can send these recommendations with your other school materials. Remember, too, that a greater number of letters does not correlate with an increased chance of being admitted. If you have six letters that all say the same thing, the only thing you have done is created more work for the admission officer.

An exception to this rule: applicants to Harvey Mudd, CalTech, or MIT, for example, should consider asking their senior thesis science research advisor to write on their behalf as these particular schools are looking closely at the ways in which you will contribute to a laboratory environment.

Interviews

Some universities require interviews, others recommend them, and others don't offer the opportunity at all. Most likely you will have to do at least one college interview during the process. Each institution is different in how they perform interviews and how they use them in the evaluation of candidates. Some schools rely on their network of alumni to do the bulk of the interviews; others employ current seniors to check out would-be-candidates. Regardless of how and why they use the interview, it is important to take some time to prepare.

The College Counseling Office is happy to help you prepare for your interview; we offer 'mock' interviews each spring for juniors as part of our program and are happy to offer them to any student upon request. For many, this could be the first time you have done a formal interview of any kind and it can be a very stressful situation. The goal of the interview should be two-fold for the applicant: 1) to show the university who you are as a person (i.e. put a face and personality to the application they are going to receive), and 2) to learn more about the institution from someone intimately acquainted with the place. This means that in preparation, you need to not only think about what an interviewer might ask you, but also prepare questions to ask that show you have truly done some research on the college.

Overall, the best advice we can give you is to showcase your "best self." Remember, the university is trying to see if you are a good match intellectually and socially for their community. Make sure that your answers reflect who you are – but are also done in a way that is not only genuine and authentic, but also highlights the positive aspects of your experience and personality.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How should I sign up for the interview?

Visit the college's website – there you will find information about how to set up an on-campus or off-campus interview. For on-campus interviews, you may need to call the office, or select a certain “interview spot” on a given day at a given time. For off-campus interviews (usually conducted by alumni), you may need to fill out an inquiry form or call the office.

How should I prepare for an interview?

Practice! Mock interviews will help you get used to talking about yourself in this setting. Schedule one with one of the College Counselors or if a local college offers interviews during the summer – sign up! You might not apply to that particular college, but you could get in some good practice. Be sure to reflect on your experiences during high school and think about how you might want to talk about these things without rambling. Finally, read the college website and other publications and highlight the information that is of interest to you.

Should I bring anything to the interview?

You should check with the school first, but most schools know they are going to see your transcript and list of activities if you apply so they don't really need to see those items at this time. However, for some students it is nice to have a handy list of their classes and activities in case nerves get the best of them and they have a mental block. Having materials for your reference is fine. A notebook for you to take notes is appropriate and depending on the school, a portfolio or other materials might also be useful tools. Again – research is key. Make sure you are prepared for the type of interview the school offers. Call and ask! But be sure to turn OFF your cell phone... or at least don't use it during your interview!

What should I wear?

Most interviewers appreciate when students look like they care about their appearance. Be comfortable, but presentable. Boys probably don't need to wear a tie, but a button-down and khaki pants could be appropriate. Girls don't need to wear a pantsuit or a dress. Err on the conservative side if you are concerned about what to wear. Cleanliness is important, and you probably don't want to wear clothing that has the name, logo, mascot or anything representing ANOTHER university on it, or, even worse, anything that could be seen as offensive. In general, just look nice. You do not need to change your personal style for an interview, but you certainly should look like you care about your appearance and the fact that you are interviewing.

Do I need to write a thank you note?

You do not need to, but we would encourage it in most cases. Sending a thoughtful e-mail or handwritten card can make a nice follow-up impression on an interviewer. Write something that indicates you were paying attention during your visit and interview.

Some sample questions that might be asked at a college interview:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why are you interested in our institution?
- How have you contributed to your community?
- What do you think of our campus?
- Tell me more about the classical or University curriculum at your school?
- What have you enjoyed your time at your high school?
- Is there a particular academic area that you find to be more interesting than others? Why?
- What was your favorite course in high school?
- Was there a particular paper or project you enjoyed during high school?
- What do you do with your free-time?
- What sorts of extra-curricular activities do you participate? Why have you chosen to continue with them?
- How would your teachers describe you as a student?
- How would your friends describe you?
- What did you do over the summer?
- What have you read lately?
- Are there particular social issues you feel passionate about?

Demonstrating Interest

In a day of ever-increasing admission competition, many colleges are not only looking at grades, scores, essays, and recommendations, but also the degree of interest you demonstrate in their institution. Many universities want to admit the strongest students possible as well as students who are most likely to accept the offer of admission. Each time you call, attend a recruitment event, or visit campus, many admissions offices track these contacts. Be sure to take advantage of every opportunity – local receptions, representative visits to BUA, on-campus events when possible, interviews, student search response cards, college fairs – and remember that such contacts will also help you as an applicant to learn more about the college and determine whether or not the institution is the right place for you.

There are some colleges – the most selective – that do not take such factors into account. If you visit Harvard everyday, it will not increase your chances of admission; you'll only be admitted if you are a compelling applicant. Find a healthy balance. Admissions offices have seen it all, so please avoid insincere inquiries or gimmicks.

APPLYING EARLY

It is best to make the decision about whether or not to apply early action or early decision on an individual basis; please consult with the College Counseling Office to see if this is the right process for you depending the schools you are considering, and your particular strengths/interests.

Since there is so much media attention paid to this topic, it may be helpful to read through the national guidelines on these early plans. Please refer to the terminology section for definitions and details on Early Decision (ED), Early Action (EA), Regular Decision, Rolling Admission and Wait List (WL).

It is important to note that these definitions and restrictions seem to be changing on a yearly basis. Some colleges – such as Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and Yale – now offer “Single Choice Early Action” which prohibits an ED or EA application to any other institution (with the exception of state universities). It is helpful to review the specifics of these types of applications on the college’s website and to consult with the college counselors as you make application decisions.

Generally, we are strong advocates of students applying somewhere through an Early Action program (if they are not applying through an early decision program, already) – as long as the student feels confident in their end-of-junior-year grades, has their testing in good shape, and can thoughtfully complete the application ahead of an early deadline. If a student is interested in applying to the University of Massachusetts, University of Vermont, University of Michigan, or a UCAS (similar to the Common Application, but for schools in the United Kingdom) institution, students really should plan on submitting EA applications (unless they are also applying to an EA college that prohibits this). Early action programs typically do not give a student a tremendous advantage in the admission process, but sometimes there can be a small statistical “bump” because students are demonstrating interest, and are competing against a much smaller group of applicants.

Early Decision application processes do often come with a more significant statistical bump (chances of admission may increase slightly for those who choose to apply somewhere through an Early Decision program). That is only true, however, for students who are already competitive in that admission process.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Forms

Two forms that families applying for financial assistance should be aware of are the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the College Board's CSS (College Scholarship Service) Profile. The FAFSA is required by all US colleges and universities, and is usually available online by October 1. Not all schools require the CSS Profile; it is important to check with each institution. Both forms are available only online:

FAFSA – <https://fafsa.ed.gov>

CSS Profile – <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

Sources and Purposes of Student Financial Aid

There are two primary sources of financial aid:

- 1) **Need-based aid** which constitutes the major portion of assistance available for post secondary education. Eligibility for need-based aid is based upon the difference between the cost-of-attendance and the family's calculated expected family contribution, and
- 2) **Merit-based aid** which is generally given to students in recognition of special skills, talent and/or academic ability.

Within the category of need-based assistance, there are two types of aid:

- 1) **Grant aid** which, as the name implies, does not have to be repaid and does not require a service commitment, and
- 2) **Self-help** assistance which consists of loans (which require repayment) and employment (part-time jobs, often within the institution).

These types of assistance, grant aid and self-help aid, are derived primarily from four sources – institutional, private, state and federal. Institutional sources of aid are provided and controlled by the institution, while private sources of aid are derived from community organizations, foundations, professional associations, corporations and commercial lending institutions. To learn more about these opportunities, you may refer to www.fastweb.com.

State sources of aid are usually administered through a state agency and include grants and scholarships. The federal government is the largest single source of student financial aid funds. The programs include Federal Pell Grants, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Work-Study, and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants – as well as Federal Stafford Student Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, and State Student Incentive Grants. Funds for these programs are appropriated annually by congress and a brief description of each program follows:

1. **Federal Pell Grant**– Pell Grants, for many students, provide a “foundation” of financial aid, to which aid from other federal and non-federal sources may be added. Unlike loans, grants don't have to be paid back. To apply for a Pell Grant, you simply file a FAFSA. By filing a FAFSA you will automatically be considered for Pell Grant Program and the institutions that you list in the space provided on the form.

To determine if you are eligible, the Department of Education uses a standard formula, revised and approved every year by congress, to evaluate the information you report when you apply for a Pell Grant. The formula produces a Student Aid Index number. Your Student Aid Report (SAR) contains this number and will tell you whether you are eligible for a Pell Grant. Pell awards will continue to be limited with a ceiling which may vary each year.

2. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants– A Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant is for undergraduate students having the greatest financial need (with priority given to Pell Grant recipients), and it does not have to be paid back.

The Department of Education guarantees that each participating school will receive enough money to pay the Pell Grants of its students. An SEOG is different. Each school receives a set amount of money for SEOGs, and when that money is gone, there are no more SEOGs for that year. Therefore, it is imperative to meet the school's financial aid application deadlines.

3. Federal Work Study Program – The Federal Work Study Program provides jobs for undergraduate students who need financial aid. Your pay will be at least the current federal minimum wage, but it may also be related to the type of work you do and its difficulty. Your total FWS award depends on your financial need, the amount of money your school has for this program, and the amount of aid you get from other programs. The financial aid office at the college you plan to attend is responsible for determining your eligibility and will offer you the opportunity to apply for certain on-campus or off-campus FWS jobs.
4. Federal Stafford Loans - Stafford Loans are low-interest loans that are made to students. The idea is to provide loan options for students who might otherwise not be able to take out a loan with a private lender because of an insufficient credit history. There are two kinds of Stafford Loans - subsidized and unsubsidized. With a subsidized loan, the interest doesn't start adding up until after you leave school - the federal government pays the interest while you're in school. With an unsubsidized loan, you are responsible for the interest that accrues during your time in college. Unsubsidized loans are open to anyone, regardless of need, but subsidized loans are only offered to students who demonstrate financial need. Many students combine subsidized and unsubsidized loans to reach the maximum amount permitted each year. Stafford loans are available from two sources:
 - Federal Family Educational Loan Program (FFELP) –For colleges participating in FFELP, loans are made with private funds and federally insured. Private financial institutions, such as banks, process loan applications and provide customer service. Your FAO (financial aid officer) can provide loan forms and recommend a lender, or you may want to apply for a loan through a participating local financial institution.
 - Federal Direct Loan Program (FDLP)
For colleges participating in FDLP, loans are available directly from the federal government. Federal contractors are responsible for processing loan applications and providing customer service. Your FAO will tell you where to obtain and send any loan forms.

5. Federal PLUS Loans - PLUS enables parents to borrow money for each dependent undergraduate student enrolled in school at least half time. Parents may finance up to the full cost of each student's education each academic year, minus grants and other financial aid received. Parents do not have to prove financial need; however, a credit check is required. Parents who do not pass the PLUS credit checks may still be eligible, if they have a credit-worthy, endorser. These loans have the highest interest rate of the federal loan programs. PLUS loans are available through both the FFELP and FDLP.
6. Federal Perkins Loan Program – The Perkins Loan is a low-interest loan made through a college's financial aid office. Preference is given to students with exceptional need. Check with your college's financial aid office to find out if they take part in the Perkins Loan Program.

Most institutions award financial aid as a “package,” which means that you receive a combination of scholarship or grant, loan and campus job. You can choose to accept none, some or all forms of assistance. Feel free to bring in your financial aid awards to the college counseling office if you'd like some assistance evaluating offers.

Net Price Calculators

As of Fall 2011, all colleges are federally required to post a “Net Price Calculator” on their website. The NPC is intended to help families gain a sense of what a financial aid package might look like from individual colleges and can usually be found on the college's financial aid page.

Not all NPC's are the same, though. Some NPC's ask very few questions and return less reliable results. Others ask many very specific questions and return clearer results. Some NPC's offer insight into how merit scholarships might impact a need-based financial aid decision, others don't. In all cases, the resulting data is only as good as the data going in – so if you are estimating family income, asset values, etc...then the net price the calculator returns will be less reliable.

In the cases of divorced parents, please know that common practice is to ask both parents to contribute to the cost of a student's education. NPC's are not generally set up to calculate costs for divorced families – therefore each parent should expect to fill out the NPC separately, then adding together the two results to determine the total Estimated Family Contribution.

Please print out a copy of all NPC results, and file those away for comparison against actual financial aid packages – your copies may provide some leverage if a college offers your family less financial assistance than the NPC suggested.

College Planning Calendar

JUNIORS

SEPTEMBER

- ___ Check the College Counseling Office bulletin board or Naviance for colleges visiting BUA.
 - ___ Keep up with class work; junior year grades weigh heavily in the admissions selection process.
 - ___ Get involved! Genuine investment in 1-2 activities is better than token participation in many.
 - ___ Register through BUA for the PSAT.
 - ___ If you are currently enrolled in calculus, talk with your math teacher and the College Counseling Office about registering for the Math II SAT Subject Test.
 - ___ Fall bi-weekly meetings begin with Assistant Director of College Counseling.
-

OCTOBER

- ___ Take PSAT. Read the PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin and take the sample test in advance.
 - ___ Attend college representative visits at BUA; attend local receptions hosted by colleges.
-

NOVEMBER

- ___ Sit for a free practice ACT at BUA for an unofficial early indication of ACT performance.
 - ___ Continue to put forth your best academic efforts in these last two years. Touch base with your faculty and professors for feedback on your performance at mid-semester.
 - ___ Pay attention to teacher comments and act on suggestions.
-

DECEMBER

- ___ Review PSAT scores with your college counselor and parents.
- ___ Discuss Revolution Prep's SAT and/or ACT prep courses with family, college counselors.
- ___ Prepare for exams; colleges look carefully at your junior grades.
- ___ Keep a copy of your Boston University syllabi.

JANUARY

- ___ Continue college exploration and research. Look through view books and college materials that arrive in the mail; visit college websites.
 - ___ Sit for a free practice SAT at BUA for an unofficial early indication of SAT performance.
 - ___ Set up appointment with the college counselors to discuss the college search process; parents are also encouraged to schedule a meeting.
 - ___ Begin weekly “Junior Meeting” with BUA college counselors.
 - ___ Familiarize yourself with Naviance and complete lengthy, assigned initial survey.
 - ___ Breakfast for **PARENTS** of juniors in mid- to late January (optional).
-

FEBRUARY

- ___ Register for March SAT Reasoning Test.
 - ___ Develop a preliminary list of colleges which interest you and contact them for information.
 - ___ Ask your parents to complete their Naviance survey.
 - ___ Attend College Colloquium (with a current admission officer) to learn about selective college admissions.
 - ___ Schedule Spring Break college visits.
-

MARCH

- ___ Meet with college counselor to discuss senior course selection and preliminary college interests. Do your courses meet college admission requirements?
- ___ Register for senior year classes.
- ___ Register for April ACT, if interested.
- ___ Take SAT Reasoning Test.
- ___ Take Subject Tests in courses you are taking this year as needed; discuss these plans with your teachers and college counselors.
- ___ Register for SAT or Subject Tests in May and/or June, as needed.
- ___ Use Spring Break as an opportunity to visit colleges.

___ Register for Advanced Placement Tests if you are taking them.

___ Continue to research colleges on preliminary list.

APRIL

___ Register for May SAT or Subject Tests, as needed.

___ Budget time, avoid end-of-the-semester crunch with paper deadlines and exams.

___ Visit, research colleges. Attend BISCCA and National College Fairs in Boston.

___ Submit three potential college essay ideas to the college counselors.

___ Work with college counselors to identify/secure two BUA teacher recommenders.

___ Plan for summer job, volunteer experience, internship in area of interest. Check out resources in College Counseling Office for summer opportunities.

___ Take practice exams in preparation for the SAT Subject Tests. Time yourself!

___ Take ACT, if interested.

MAY

___ Register for June ACT, SAT and/or Subject Tests, as needed.

___ Take SAT Reasoning or SAT Subject Tests, as needed.

___ Utilize Naviance to compare colleges of interests, note application types and deadlines.

___ Keep a copy of your Boston University syllabi.

___ Request a mock interview with college counselors (optional).

JUNE

___ Take SAT Reasoning or SAT Subject Tests.

___ Continue to research colleges and plan summer visits, if possible.

___ If interested, register for the BUA college essay writing workshop.

___ Register for July ACT, if interested.

JULY

- ___ Register for August SAT or Subject Tests, if needed.
- ___ Take ACT exam, if registered.
- ___ Visit college campuses, participate in college interviews, work on college essay draft(s).

SENIORS

AUGUST

- ___ Register for September ACT, if interested.
 - ___ Visit college campuses, participate in college interviews, work on college essay draft(s).
 - ___ Create a Common Application account. Participate in Common App ‘boot camp’ at BUA (optional).
-

SEPTEMBER

- ___ Personal Statement/college essay due in College Counseling Office upon return to school.
- ___ Register for the October and/or November SAT and/or SAT Subject Tests, if needed.
- ___ Register for the October ACT, if needed.
- ___ Begin weekly “Senior Meeting” with BUA college counselors.
- ___ Check in regularly with your college counselor, faculty advisor about your courses. Are they manageable? Do you anticipate needing extra help?
- ___ Check Naviance for – and attend meetings with – college representatives visiting BUA.
- ___ Edit and polish Personal Statement and begin working on short answer essays.
- ___ If applying to schools in the United Kingdom, fill out the UCAS forms.
- ___ Reduce your preliminary list of colleges to fifteen or fewer.
- ___ Complete the CSS Profile registration form if you are applying early.
- ___ Confirm which teachers are writing letters of recommendation.

- ___ Find out exactly what forms, test results, interview expectations, etc. are necessary to apply to all colleges in which you are interested.
 - ___ Sit for ACT exam, if registered.
 - ___ Draft of Common Application due to College Counseling Office.
-

OCTOBER

- ___ Review your transcript with a counselor.
 - ___ Having trouble in one of your classes? Set up a meeting with your professor or T.A. Notify the college counseling office immediately.
 - ___ Register and review for November SAT or SAT Subject Tests, if needed.
 - ___ Take SAT or Subject Tests and/or ACT, if registered.
 - ___ Attend college representative meetings.
 - ___ If you plan to apply early decision or early action, you must inform the College Counseling Office by mid-October.
 - ___ Check financial aid requirements for schools to which you plan to apply EA or ED.
 - ___ Continue to work on supplemental application essays.
 - ___ Coffee for **PARENTS** of seniors in mid-October.
-

NOVEMBER

- ___ Take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests, if registered. Do you want your scores sent to additional colleges? Fill in the four free score report recipients at the administration.
- ___ Touch base with your faculty and professors for feedback on your performance at mid-semester. Colleges may put a heavy emphasis on this semester's grades.
- ___ Update your college list in Naviance before Thanksgiving. By late November/early December, your list of schools should be relatively final, well-balanced and fewer than 10.
- ___ Check with the college office about scholarships.
- ___ Complete, submit University of California system application (open November 1-30).
- ___ Register for December ACT, SAT or Subject Tests, if needed.

___ Request interviews at colleges of interest, continue working on supplemental essays.

DECEMBER

___ Take ACT, SAT and/or SAT Subject Tests, if registered.

___ Complete all applications for admission. Keep electronic and hard copies!

___ Be aware of all application and financial aid deadlines.

___ Complete FAFSA and CSS Profile, if necessary.

___ EA and ED applicants will begin to receive decision in early/mid-December. Remember to not let these decisions distract from preparation for your final exams.

___ Keep a copy of your Boston University syllabi.

___ Plan to submit all college applications by late December (preferably earlier!!!)

JANUARY

___ Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

___ Check with your references – have they sent recommendations?

___ Ask your parents to begin last year's tax forms and aim for early completion.

___ Make sure all applications are complete.

___ College interviews by invitation.

FEBRUARY

___ Check announcements and online resources for scholarship information.

___ Monitor application portals for application status. If you speak with an admission office staff member, record the date and their name. Let the College Counseling Office know immediately if any credentials are missing from your admission files.

MARCH

___ Regular Decision results are posted/mailed in mid-late March. Prepare for their arrival.

___ Register for Advanced Placement Tests if you are taking them in May.

___ If you applied for financial aid, watch for the Financial Aid Form Acknowledgement and the Student Aid Report from the FAFSA Program.

___ Coffee for **PARENTS** of seniors in mid-March.

APRIL

___ Review your acceptances and financial aid offers with college counselors.

___ Visit the colleges of your choice before making the final decision.

___ Notify the college of your choice. Send enrollment deposit to be received by May 1st.

___ Make decisions about any waitlist offers you may have received.

MAY

___ By May 1, make enrollment deposit.

___ Notify schools you have decided not to attend.

___ Keep your counselors informed of your decisions and any scholarships you receive.

___ Send your Student Aid Report (S.A.R.) to your chosen college – keep copy for your records.

___ If necessary, apply for a student loan at a local bank.

___ Apply for summer jobs to help pay for college costs.

___ Keep your BU course syllabi.

___ Contact the college you are attending to explore receiving transfer or placement credit. Let the College Counseling Office know if you need a letter sent detailing which courses are eligible for college credit. Send an official BU transcript from the BU registrar to your college destination once final grades are posted.

___ Graduate!!!

Helpful Websites and References

https://connection.naviance.com	Naviance – Web-based college research and application program (BUA students, parents provided with logon information in January of student’s junior year)
www.mefa.org	Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) – resource for students/families from Massachusetts applying for financial aid
www.studentaid.ed.gov	Student Guide to Federal Aid – Government site for financial aid
www.fastweb.com	FastWeb – personalized scholarship search tool
www.collegeboard.com	College Board – SAT, Subject Tests, CSS Profile, test registration, tools and tips
www.actstudent.org	ACT – ACT registration, tools and tips
www.nacacnet.org	National Association for College Admission Counseling – web resources and national college fair information for students
www.ncaa.org	National Collegiate Athletic Association - Information for the student athlete
https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/	NCAA Eligibility Center – Registration site for recruited athletes
www.fafsa.ed.gov	FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid
https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/fsaid	FAFSA FSA ID – ID required for FAFSA application, submission
https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/	CSS Profile – Financial Aid form required by some private colleges
www.finaid.org	FinAid – personalized scholarship search tool
www.finaid.org/calculators	FinAid calculator tool – Loan, estimated family contribution calculations
www.commonapp.org	Common Application – Home of the application, the list of schools accepting the application, additional requirements by each school
www.petersons.com	Peterson’s Guide – Searchable database of college profiles, scholarships, etc.
www.cappex.com/scholarships/	Cappex – Search engine for scholarships

Appendices

- Sample BUA transcript - [Click here to view](#)
- College Board resource – [Financial Aid 101](#)
- College Board resource – [How to Complete the CSS Profile](#)
- U.S. Department of Education resource – [Filling Out the FAFSA](#)