

BEYOND THE ACADEMY

Welcome to *Beyond The Academy*, which is our comprehensive handbook that is designed to help you and your parents navigate the college admissions process. The book describes in detail our approach to applying to college. The information in the handbook is organized to take you and your parents through all of the steps of the college application process. You can select specific chapters or download a PDF of the entire book.

We encourage you to get familiarized with the Table of Contents and read each chapter when appropriate. For example, when you have a campus visit scheduled, we encourage you to read **Chapter 4: College Visits**. When you return from your visit with questions about the application, you may find **Chapter 5: College Admissions Criteria**, and **Chapter 6: Creating the Application** to be appropriate. This handbook will provide you with helpful information regarding the criteria colleges use to admit students, as well as information you should use to help select colleges. We have included a wealth of information on financial aid, athletic and artistic recruitment, and advice for international students. We hope *Beyond The Academy* will be a helpful resource throughout your college search.

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COLLEGE MISSION/GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement

Lawrence Academy's college counseling program helps students to identify colleges and universities that are a good match for their interests, needs and goals, and supports them and their families throughout the application process.

Objectives

1. To put students at the center of the college application process enabling them to take leadership of their search.
2. To help students understand that the college search is an integral part of their academic program.
3. To insure that students are healthy and supported during the college process.
4. To educate colleges about Lawrence Academy's programs.
5. To stay current with trends in our profession.
6. To communicate the expectations and outcomes of the college counseling program to all LA constituencies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Fit & Process, and Partnership Agreement (Student, Parent, and College Counselor Responsibilities)

FIT AND PROCESS

We are honored to work with you and your parents on the college process. We feel privileged to have the opportunity to be counseling you through this exciting time in your life. It is important to note that it is a process and not just an outcome. The college process is a time for you to undergo great self-discovery and to articulate your goals for the future. We aim to give you and your family the support and tools they need to find the right fit- the institution that is best suited to offer the academic and personal challenge that is appropriate to your ability and interests.

The college process is an integral part of your educational experience at Lawrence Academy. For the first time you are able to use the skills you acquired in the classroom in a real world application. Much like the other classes offered at LA, we use a student centered approach to our work. While we believe that you need to play the lead role in the process, we encourage your parents to work closely with us in preparing and supporting you as you navigate this exciting and defining step in your life. During the college process we ask that you are ready engage in and complete five tasks:

- to engage in a self-evaluation
- to determine what they want in a college
- to honestly appraise themselves as a college candidate
- to complete their applications
- to choose the colleges they will attend

As you start to think about fit, it is important for you to undergo a thorough self-evaluation of your interests and goals. You also need to think about the types of learning environments that will best match your abilities as a student. We will help you sort through statistical information regarding former Lawrence Academy students, the colleges' admitted student profiles and recent admission trends to assess your chances of being admitted. We hope that by working together we can help you navigate the college process in a healthy and productive manner.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

As we start this exciting process, it is helpful to know that you, your parents and your counselor have specific roles to play. This process is a partnership, and it is crucial that members of the partnership clearly understand and accept their role.

Student Responsibilities

- Check your email daily.
- Read all communications from the College Counseling Office.
- Read and understand **Beyond the Academy**.
- Participate fully in the life of the school.
- Carefully follow the rules and expectations of the school.
- Attend all of your scheduled college counseling classes.
- Schedule and attend meetings with your assigned counselor.
- Keep your counselor up to date your plans, progress and results. Communicate regularly with your counselor.
- Research the basic admissions criteria at the colleges you are considering.
- Register for SAT/ACT testing.
- Plan to visit colleges during spring break and on summer vacation.
- Complete the junior college questionnaire on Naviance by June of the junior year.
- Attend College Fairs.
- Request letters of recommendation from two teachers junior year.
- Meet college representatives visiting Lawrence Academy during the fall of senior year.
- Complete applications honestly and accurately noting deadlines.

Parent Responsibilities

- Be open with your child. Discuss college plans, including the financial picture and any restrictions, openly and honestly with your child early in the process. Share these thoughts with the college counselor either by phone, in writing, or in person.
- Support and communicate with your child and his or her counselor.
- Complete the Parent Questionnaire. This form, which is available on Naviance (www.connection.naviance.com/lawrence), should be completed by the end of the junior year. This form adds greatly to our understanding of your child, which in turn enables us to write a better, more comprehensive school statement.
- Be aware of deadlines and other commitments.
- Help your child send out test scores to colleges. The student, not the college office, is responsible for sending test scores to the colleges that require them.
- Plan visits. Assist your child in visiting colleges if possible.
- Fill out and file financial aid forms, if applying for financial aid.
- Keep talking with your child. Check with your son or daughter periodically about the progress of his/her college application process, testing, and information distributed at school. But please remember, too, that your child should own the college admission process.

Help your child to recognize and celebrate strengths. A weekly college check-in between parents and students is a good way to balance the need to stay on top of the process with the goal of encouraging students to take responsibility for the process.

- Be familiar with the policies and recommendations in **Beyond the Academy**.
- Communicate with the College Counseling Office. We are here to support and help you too.

College Counselor Responsibilities

- Work hard to get to know our students – to understand and appreciate their goals, talents, and interests.
- Discuss college planning with the student and the parents and help the child to develop a schedule, testing plan, and, eventually, a balanced list that represents good matches.
- Provide information about the chances of admission to particular colleges.
- Provide resources and opportunities for students and families to learn about various colleges.
- Be effective advocates for our students, presenting their transcripts and official school recommendations to the colleges so that they have the strongest chance of being given favorable consideration.
- Listen to, learn from, and communicate with parents. Personalize the process to each individual student.
- Treat the college process as an opportunity for growth and self-evaluation that will ensure that students leave the process with a better understanding of themselves.
- Make students aware of information about visitations, special events, open houses at colleges, deadlines, scholarships and testing.
- Prepare and send transcripts to colleges and the NCAA, if necessary.
- Prepare a well-written school statement that portrays the candidate in a positive and honest light with an emphasis on strengths and patterns of growth where appropriate.
- Send final grade reports to the colleges.

Chapter 2: Beginning the Search

Self Evaluation, Criteria for Choosing a College, Evaluate and Balance Your List, and Naviance

SELF EVALUATION

One of the primary goals of the college process is to find the right fit. To accomplish this task you must have a strong understanding of your identity, skills and goals. You also must assess what types of colleges appeal to you. Through self reflection and research you will start to gain a stronger sense of what schools are the right fit for you.

As mentioned in Chapter One, helping you gain a better sense of your identity is a goal of the college process. If you are to find the right fit, you need to understand and appreciate who you are. This process of self reflection will not only help in the college process, but hopefully it will also help you mature as you start to think more carefully about who you are as an individual. To help facilitate this process, we use questionnaires, surveys and conversations. We ask that you complete a questionnaire on Naviance before they end of your junior year, and we have you complete the Do What You Are personality indicator on Naviance during the winter of your junior year. We use this information to start having conversations with you about your personality, traits and skills. We also ask you to think about topics such as:

- your personality and relationship with others
- your learning style
- your involvement in school activities
- your concern for other people and the world
- your goals and values
- your favorite subjects and activities
- your goals for the future

Once you have undergone this self-evaluation you can start to better understand what colleges might best suit you. Although all of you will not complete the college process with a complete understanding of your identity, we hope that it will start you on a journey of self-discovery.

RESEARCHING COLLEGES

Researching colleges is an extremely important task that you must complete. There are over 3,500 colleges in the United States and Canada. You need to begin your search with an open mind. Your objective should be to find schools that fit with your interests and needs. There are several sources available to you as you begin your research. Hopefully, at the end of the research process you can start to construct a preliminary list of schools that will be balanced. Your preliminary list may well include institutions unfamiliar to you. Research them nonetheless. They are there for a reason! Never let yourself be guided by “name recognition” alone. Perhaps, in your counselor’s opinion, an unfamiliar school fits your academic and/or extracurricular needs well, or a recent Lawrence graduate with whom you have a good deal in common had a great experience there. It costs nothing to explore! Know that you will learn just as much about yourself as you will about the colleges. It is okay to change your mind (for example, you think you want a large campus, but after visiting you realize that a smaller student body might be a better match) and to explore ideas and places you have never thought of before.

Do not underestimate the importance of research! The goal of your research is to develop a list of colleges that you know a lot about—what makes them unique from other schools, and why each school on the list sounds appealing to you. You need to find out about each college from several sources. From this list you will choose institutions to visit over the summer. Those visits will allow you to choose where you will ultimately apply in the fall.

Researching colleges, as with any of your other subjects, takes time if you are going to do it well and thoroughly. You will need to take notes, so always have a pen and paper handy. When using the Internet, as you surely will, you might have to copy down a school’s URL. Here are possible avenues to explore:

General College Guides

Remember that these are someone else’s assessments and views of a given college; do not let one source make a decision for you. We recommend that you research each college in several sources, then move on to the next college. You should consider acquiring your own personal copies of at least one of these guides. A number of publications provide general information about America’s colleges. These include: The College Board’s College Handbook; Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges; Peterson’s 4 Year Colleges. Others provide a more subjective view, including: Edward B. Fiske’s *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*; and *The Insider’s Guide to Colleges*, from *The Yale Daily News*.

The Internet

The internet is an extremely useful source of information for anyone involved in the college search. You can search college databases, including the one found on Naviance, by location, size, major, and cost to find the right matches for you; you can request view books, and course catalogs; you can take a “virtual tour” of a campus; you can browse the curriculum.

As technology continues to expand, we in the College Office will do our best to stay current with information we think can help you. Here is a short, and by no means complete, list of useful websites. When you begin to “surf,” stay alert for particularly great college sites; jot down the Internet address and let us know what you have found so that we can update our list. Have fun, but be wary of websites like College Confidential that regularly post inaccurate information.

Naviance: <http://connection.naviance.com>
Peterson's Guide: www.petersons.com
The College Board: www.collegeboard.com
College Net: www.collegenet.com
MyCollegeGuide www.mycollegeguide.org
Common Application: www.commonapp.org
Google University Search: www.google.com/options/universities.html
National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC): www.nacacnet.org

Admissions Officers at Lawrence Academy

Many colleges send representatives to LA in the fall to answer questions about their colleges. An up-to-date schedule of these visits will be available online in Naviance, and will also be posted in the Student Lounge and in the Ansin Academic Building. You can also follow the visits via twitter. (twitter.com/LACollegeC)

Friends

You may have friends who are either in college or who have already gone through the college selection process. They are an excellent resource if used with care. Question them about their reasons for choosing certain colleges and avoiding others. See if those reasons fit your idea of preferred colleges; never cross a college off your list merely because a friend did not like it. Think for yourself!

Requesting Materials

You can often request materials directly from a college's website. Admission officers will send appropriate materials and may also ask coaches, drama directors, orchestra conductors, and others to get in touch with you. The more information you provide the more specific the response is likely to be.

CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A COLLEGE

These are criteria that can be used to evaluate and ultimately choose a college, though some may be more pertinent than others in your search.

Student Enrollment

- ENROLLMENT – Small (1,000-3,000), medium (3,000-7,000), large (10,000-15,000). Freshman class size. % Undergraduate students.
- RETENTION - % of freshmen that eventually graduate or return for their sophomore year.
- BACKGROUND - Male/female ratio. % Commuter / resident. Geographic origin. % minority. % on financial aid.

Location and Surroundings

- LOCATION - New England, West Coast, Middle Atlantic states, the South, a foreign country. Distance from home. Travel costs and convenience.

- SETTING - Urban/Suburban/Rural. Weather. Nearest city or countryside. Recreational opportunities.
- FACILITIES - Library. Laboratories. Study and practice rooms. Student center. Athletic complex. Art studios. Theater. Bookstore. Food sources.

College Type and Philosophy

- TYPE - 2/4 year. Religious/public/private/historically Black. Coed/Single-sex. College/university.
- PURPOSE - Liberal arts. Technical/vocational institute. Conservatory. Art /design college. Pre-professional for business, education, engineering, fine arts. Degrees offered.
- PHILOSOPHY - Traditional/progressive. Deeply scholarly/career oriented. Comprehensive.
- CALENDAR - Semester/trimester/quarter/module. Inter-term program. Accelerated.

Curriculum

- ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS - Proportion of study dedicated to core requirements/major/electives. Required freshman courses.
- ACADEMIC OFFERINGS – Majors/minors offered in your areas of interest. Breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest. Interdisciplinary courses. Strong departments.
- INDEPENDENT STUDY - Individual tutorials. Seminars. Research opportunities.
- SPECIAL STUDY PROGRAMS - Field work. Internships. Exchange programs. Semester/year abroad study. Joint degree programs. Cooperative work/study plan. Pre-professional programs.
- STANDARDS - Accreditation. Degree requirements. Grading system. Grading/distribution. Honor system.
- COURSE DESCRIPTION - Introductory/advanced/specialized courses. Courses for majors/non-majors. Number of courses required for major/Course availability

Academic Environment

- FACULTY - % with Ph.D. Origin of degrees earned. Original faculty research/scholarship. Teaching course load. Expectations for teaching/scholarship/advising and other college service. Emphasis on undergraduate teaching and learning.
- FACULTY-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS - Faculty-student ratio. Advising. Accessibility for conferences, assistance. Departmental clubs, colloquia, committees with student representatives. Class size, average. Classes under 20 students, over 50 students. Opportunities for discussion/student presentation/exchange of ideas.
- ACADEMIC DEMANDS - Workload. Course expectations. Type of assignments. Academic pressure/competition.
- INTELLECTUAL VITALITY - Student attitude toward learning. Flexibility/structure for learning. Exchange of ideas. Interest in political, social, or world issues.
- CAREER PREPARATION - Pre-professional programs. Career advising and information programs. % who go on to graduate school. Graduate school and job placement.

- INSTRUCTION - What types of teaching/learning situations exist? If I know my field of interest, what courses and faculty are available in it? Do full professors teach undergraduates? Is there an advisor system?

Campus and Student Life

- TYPES OF STUDENTS - Diversity and response to differences. Typical/offbeat student. Importance of money/material possessions/social appearances.
- COMMUNITY TYPE - Homogeneous. Pluralistic. Cohesive. Fragmented. School spirit. Controversial campus issues. Liberal/directive/restrictive social regulations. Political climate.
- LIVING ARRANGEMENTS - Predominantly large dorms/housing clusters/small houses. Availability of single rooms/doubles/suites/multiple rooms. System of housing allocation/roommate selection. Centralized/decentralized dining. Alternate dining programs. Single sex/co-ed dorms. Housing guaranteed.
- CAMPUS ACTIVITIES - Activities related to your interests. Emphasis on social life, fraternities or sororities, sports, or other dominant interests. Clubs and organizations traditional/creative/competitive issue oriented. Presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community.

Admissions

- DEADLINES - Application. Notification of decision. Deadline to reply to offer of admission.
- APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS - Fee. Information forms. Specific high school courses. Secondary school report. Recommendations. Interview. Common Application supplements.
- SAT/ACT/SUBJECT TESTS - What are the college's testing requirements?
- ADMISSION SELECTIVITY - % of applicants offered admission. Average SAT/ACT scores of freshmen. % of freshmen ranked in top 10% of high school class. Freshman class profile.
- FINANCIAL – Need blind or need considered?

Costs and Financial Aid

- COSTS - Minimum-maximum total costs per year. Student budget for tuition and fees/room and board/books and personal expenses/travel costs. Admission and enrollment fees.
- FAMILY RESOURCES - What can your family pay toward college expenses? Your earnings and savings.
- AWARDS - % of students receiving aid. Range of awards. Average award.
- FINANCIAL AID - Based on need/merit/or funds available. Loan and job expectations. Off-campus work opportunities.
- APPLICATION - Which forms are required? Deadlines.

Intangibles

- Does the atmosphere of the institution appeal to me?

EVALUATE AND BALANCE YOUR LIST

The ultimate goal of the college search is to create a **balanced** list of **six to eight** schools that fall into four categories, based upon likelihood of admission. The terms we use - likely, possible, reach and far reach - are relative, not absolute. In determining where a given school falls for you, we use our best judgment based on experience with recent Lawrence graduates (this information is recorded in college-specific scattergrams in Naviance Family Connection) and with trends we are seeing at that particular institution. Obviously, your academic record is important here as well. If we believe certain schools are unrealistic, we will tell you so. Changes in academic performance during the junior and senior year may well move certain colleges “up” or “down” on the list. We offer frank advice to help you evaluate your chances at a particular school, not as a judgment of your performance during your time at Lawrence. Ideally, your final list should be so constructed that you will be admitted to most of the colleges on it. If things don’t work out so well, you should still have at least two or three good choices.

We define the four categories of colleges on your list as follows:

Likely

Lawrence students with your grades and scores have been admitted in the recent past at about a 75% admit rate. These are schools where your credentials are very competitive, and we are confident that you will be admitted, assuming your application has been done well and your interest in the school has been well demonstrated through an interview, a campus visit when possible, and through your good and thoughtful answers to any supplemental essay questions asking why you are applying to that college. We consider it essential to find “likely” schools where you believe you can be happy and productive.

Possible

Some Lawrence students with your grades and scores have been admitted, and some have not. Chances of admission are roughly 50%. Your credentials are competitive and you are qualified academically. This may also be a school where factors beyond pure academics can influence admission. Many of the same principles of the “likely” schools apply here. Your application needs to be completed carefully; you should show interest by means of an interview, follow-ups, and so on.

Reach

Lawrence Academy students with similar grades and test scores are less likely to be admitted, except in cases where extenuating circumstances, such as strong coach support or active alumni connections, affect the decision. There is usually a 20 - 30% chance of being admitted.

Far Reach

There is virtually no way you will get in. Not only are your credentials not as strong as other students who have been admitted from Lawrence recently, but also the overall percentage of admitted applicants, in most cases, is extremely small.

NAVIANCE

One of the most important tools you will use in the college counseling process is the Family Connection tool called Naviance. Naviance is a database where the college counselors keep all of the academic and college information for each student in your class. At the beginning of the college process, we provide you with a registration code for you. These are just some of the things you can do on the Family Connection site:

- Fill out the **Junior Questionnaire**.
- Search for colleges using the **College Search, College Lookup, College Match, and College Compare** tools.
- View your college list.
- Search for scholarships.

You may also explore, with the help of your college counselor, our scattergrams, or graphs that display the admission statistics for all Lawrence Academy applicants to a particular college within a specified year or years. These graphs allow us to show you or your parents the anonymous grade point average and SAT scores for each student who has applied to a particular college from LA, and the decision rendered by the college. The scattergrams are a great tool when searching for colleges that are within the appropriate admission range for a particular student. The Family Connection website is: <http://connection.naviance.com/lawrence>

Chapter 3: Testing for College Admission

Test Descriptions, Registering for Tests, Reporting Test Scores, Test Preparation, and ACT vs. SAT

Standardized testing is an important factor in admission decisions, especially at most highly selective colleges and universities. Though a few institutions have downplayed the importance of test scores and others have eliminated test requirements entirely, they are in the minority. It is essential for you to understand the purpose of testing in the admission process while keeping its role in perspective. Here are descriptions of the different tests, along with guidelines for registering and reporting scores and some comments on test preparation.

TEST DESCRIPTIONS

PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary SAT/National Merit Qualifying Test

You will take this test twice in October of your sophomore and junior years. Registration is coordinated through the school registrar. It has the same format as the SAT Reasoning Test and is intended to be used for practice and as a predictor of your possible SAT scores. **Your PSAT scores are not sent to colleges**, but you may receive mail from colleges as a result of your taking the PSAT. A very small number of high-scoring juniors may be named National Merit Scholarship finalists, semi-finalists, or commended scholars. Finalists, very few in number nationally, may be awarded scholarships by some colleges.

SAT REASONING TEST

Given by the College Board (www.collegeboard.org), the SAT is a three-hour, forty-five minute test in three sections: critical reading, mathematics, and writing.

SAT SUBJECT TEST

Subject Tests are one-hour tests measuring your knowledge of specific subject areas such as languages, math, sciences, and history. Testing dates are the same as for the SAT, though not all subjects are available on every date. Colleges may require two or sometimes three Subject Tests in addition to the SAT Reasoning Test. Subject Tests can be taken at any time during a student's high school career. Three tests can be taken in one sitting, however, we suggest taking only one or two at a time, preferably in the junior year or early in the senior year (unless you are certain early in the process that none of the colleges to which you plan to apply require Subject Tests). For more information about the SAT Subject Tests, access the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org.

THE ACT (AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST)

The ACT is a popular alternative to the SAT Reasoning Test. Its design is quite different from the SAT, both in structure and in terms of what it measures. While the SAT measures reasoning ability, the ACT assesses what the student has learned in the classroom. The ACT, which lasts three hours, is comprised of four tests: English, mathematics, reading and science. A fifth section, writing, adds 30 minutes to the testing time. We recommend that students always take the ACT with writing. Virtually all colleges will accept either SAT or ACT scores. In most cases, the ACT can substitute for both the SAT and the Subject Tests; some schools, however, require the Subject Tests of students who submit the ACT. Again, talk with your counselor and do some careful research! Visit www.actstudent.org for more information.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

Used to evaluate English proficiency, the TOEFL is required by most American colleges of students whose native language is not English. Students who did not learn English as a first language or in whose home English is generally not spoken may also take it. Students usually take the TOEFL in addition to the ACT or SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests. See the International Student article for more information about this test, and access the website at WWW.TOEFL.ORG.

REGISTERING FOR TESTS

Lawrence Academy CEEB school code: 220-940

Lawrence Academy SAT test center code: 22-404

Lawrence Academy ACT test center code: 199-460

1. It is your responsibility to register for the SAT, ACT, and any Subject Tests.
2. Lawrence Academy REQUIRES juniors to take the SAT in January, the ACT in April, and recommends two or three Subject Tests in June. Most students will take the SAT and/or ACT at least twice and two different Subject Tests. Speak with your college counselor about your testing schedule.
3. Online registration is the easiest method for students to sign up for the SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests, or the ACT. Go to www.collegeboard.org or www.actstudent.org to sign up. You will need a valid, major credit card to register.
4. **Always use exactly the same name and address when signing up for any tests!** If you sign up once as Jane P. Sherman and as Janie Sherman another time, the computer will treat you as two different people. Be just as precise with your address, birth date, Social Security number, and testing codes!
5. **Concerning the Subject Tests:** Tests in “ongoing” subjects like literature or mathematics can be taken on any available date. Math Level I, however, should be taken at the end of Math 3. Tests in a “terminal” subject such as Honors Chemistry should be taken in June, immediately after the course has ended and the material is still fresh in your mind. Consult your counselor and teacher.
6. **Extended-time testing:** Students eligible for extended-time testing must have on file in the Studies Office an educational evaluation done in the last three years, with a specific recommendation from the learning specialist for extended time. The student must have been receiving the recommended classroom accommodations for four months prior to the first test date. **Candidates who need extended-time testing must apply for it by mail;** they must notify the Director of Academic Support (Mrs. Kimberly Poulin) at least **seven weeks in advance of the test date** so that all necessary forms can be completed and sent on time. Registration for extended-time testing may then be done online once the student has received the appropriate “SSD code.” Please note that while obtaining extended time for the SAT is relatively easy, it is extremely difficult to do so for the ACT. See your counselor for details.

You will receive an admission ticket for all testing sessions, which you should print out and bring to the test with you. Check the information on the ticket for accuracy and make sure that you are assigned to the correct test center. If you are not, or if you have other questions, see Ms. Cheryl

Lancaster, the Director of Testing, well ahead of the test date. Keep your admission tickets and score reports you receive in a specific file. You will need registration numbers and test dates later in the application process.

Recommended testing plan

Freshman and Sophomore years

- Register for and take any SAT Subject Tests that you are qualified to take in June. Refer to chart at the end of this chapter.
- Sophomores take the PSAT in October—LA will register the students.

Junior year

- October: PSAT— LA will register juniors for this test
- December: register for SAT Reasoning Test and ACT
- January: take the SAT reasoning test for the first time
- February/April: take the ACT for the first time
- March/May: SAT test dates can be used to re-take the SAT Reasoning test
- May/June: SAT test dates should be used to take SAT Subject Tests. Your college counselor will help you choose.
- June: ACT test date can be used to re-take the ACT

Senior year

- Re-take the SAT Reasoning Test, Subject Tests, and ACT as needed

REPORTING TEST SCORES

The only way for colleges to see your SAT or ACT scores is for YOU to send them. They are not on Lawrence Academy's transcript, nor is it the Academy's responsibility to send scores.

- **Colleges require official score reports sent directly to them from the testing agency.** As a rule, they will not accept a copy of your report (the one the agency has sent to you). Always have an official report sent!
- **Score Choice allows you to decide which SAT score sets to send to colleges.** If your junior-year SAT scores are better than your October ones from senior year, for example, you may send just those. However, if your scores are “split,” that is, if your math is better in June and your critical reading is higher in October, you should simply opt send both the June and October score reports and allow the colleges to pick the best ones, which they almost always will.

- For the ACT, you must send reports for each testing date separately.
- **Use the correct code.** Every college and other organization that might want to see your scores has a four-digit code listed in the back of the registration booklet or online.
- SAT and ACT registration forms have spaces in which to put these codes when you register; a certain number of official reports are sent “free” - part of the price of registration. **Do not list any colleges in this space when you take the test as a junior!** Do, however, use the spaces for senior test dates, at least for colleges to which you are fairly certain to apply.
- **When should colleges have your scores?** While there is no standard deadline, you should try to order test reports early enough that they will arrive at the college about the same time as your application.
- You can always send scores after the fact, however, it costs money and takes time —up to six weeks —so order score reports early in the senior year. A “rush” reporting service is available for a significant fee if you really must send scores at the last minute.

TEST PREPARATION

Familiarity with the organization, structure, and types of questions on any standardized test can be helpful, as it will allow you, on test day, to focus on the content of the questions without having to spend extra time during the test to figure out directions. Some basic, common-sense strategies can be useful in preventing extra stress and unnecessarily wasted time.

Many types of test preparation for the SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests and the ACT are available, including books, computer software, online practice, and commercial courses that require a significant investment of time and money. At the very least, you should familiarize yourself with the format and structure of the exams by using the booklets The College Board provides for both the SAT and the Subject Tests. These are obtainable in the Studies Office, and online through the testing agencies. A similar booklet is available for the ACT. All contain practice test questions, as do many of the test-preparation books on the market. Some students are motivated to prepare on their own, while others may believe that they will not do the necessary preparation unless they have the external motivation that comes from a formal course.

There is debate as to whether or not coaching can have a significant impact on a student’s scores, but some sort of preparation is definitely beneficial; you and your family can decide which is best for you. If you do opt to take one of the commercial courses, you are strongly advised to do so **during the summer between your junior and senior years.** Students are far too busy during the school year to take on the additional burden of a prep course, which may require six or more hours of homework per week.

ACT vs. SAT

	ACT	SAT
Length	3 hours, 25 minutes (including the 30-minute optional Writing Test)	3 hours, 45 minutes
Sections	4 test sections (5 with the optional Essay, known as the Writing Test)	10 Sections
Areas Tested	English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing (optional)	Critical Reading, Math, Writing (includes the Essay), Experimental (un-scored)
Reading (ACT) / Critical Reading (SAT)	4 Reading Comprehension passages, 10 questions per passage	Mix of Reading Comprehension and Sentence Completion questions that require vocabulary expertise
Science	Science Reasoning (analysis, interpretation, evaluation, problem solving) covered	Science not included
Math	Math accounts for 1/4 of overall score Topics Covered: Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry (4 questions)	Math accounts for 1/3 of overall score Topics Covered: Basic Geometry and Algebra II
Essay	Last thing you do (optional); 30 minutes Not included in composite score	First thing you do; 25 minutes Factored into overall score
Scoring	Total composite score of 1-36 (based on average of 4 tests) 4 scores of 1-36 for each test Score of 0-12 for the optional Essay	Total score out of 2400 3 scores of 200-800 for each section 2 sub-scores of 20-80 for writing multiple choice and 0-12 for the Essay
Wrong Answer Penalty	No wrong answer penalty	Yes, 1/4 point per wrong answer (except for Math Grid-in questions)
Sending Score History	You decide which date is sent	Score choice enables you to have some choice about which test scores are sent to colleges.

Concordance between ACT Composite Score and Sum of SAT Critical Reading and Mathematics Scores *					
SAT CR+M (Score Range)	ACT Composite	SAT CR+M (Single Score)	SAT CR+M (Score Range)	ACT Composite Score	SAT CR+M (Single Score)
1600	36	1600	1050–1080	23	1070
1540–1590	35	1560	1020–1040	22	1030
1490–1530	34	1510	980–1010	21	990

1440–1480	33	1460	940–970	20	950
1400–1430	32	1420	900–930	19	910
1360–1390	31	1380	860–890	18	870
1330–1350	30	1340	820–850	17	830
1290–1320	29	1300	770–810	16	790
1250–1280	28	1260	720–760	15	740
1210–1240	27	1220	670–710	14	690
1170–1200	26	1190	620–660	13	640
1130–1160	25	1150	560–610	12	590
1090–1120	24	1110	510–550	11	530
* table from www.act.org					

Chapter 4: Campus Visits

Planning the Visit, Questions for your Tour Guide, The Interview, Questions During an Interview, Campus Visit Manners, and The Thank You Note

Visiting and interviewing at college campuses are vital parts of your college search. The better you prepare, and the better informed you are before leaving home, the more useful the results will be to you in clarifying your likes and dislikes.

We ask you to try to visit a few campuses during spring break of your junior year, to get an idea of what different types of colleges are like. However, most of your traveling and almost all your interviewing will take place over the summer prior to your senior year.

Summer visits and interviews are usually arranged by telephone or online during the spring of your junior year. If you plan to apply to Ivy League or other highly selective schools, be aware that their on-campus interview slots fill up very early—contact them early in the spring to reserve a time.

You should also know that while a campus visit is mostly for your information, many colleges expect prospective applicants to make the effort to see the campus if doing so is at all practical. Therefore, visit as many schools as possible, and be sure to give equal attention to a wide range of colleges - not just those on the top of your list.

Today more than ever, the same can be true for interviews, which many colleges interpret as a sign of interest. Colleges that offer interviews expect serious applicants to make the effort to have one, be it on campus or elsewhere. Not interviewing has caused strong Lawrence candidates to be wait-listed rather than admitted in recent years.

PLANNING THE VISIT

1. Call or check online for tour times or to reserve a spot on the tour and information session.
2. Many colleges have a formal information session at a specific time of the day. We recommend you attend this as well as do the campus tour.
3. Call ahead to see if the college offers on-campus interviews and try to arrange one (at least 2 weeks in advance). While college admission offices will try to accommodate your needs and requests, it may not always be possible. The earlier you schedule visits, the better your chances of getting the dates and times you prefer. **We recommend interviewing during the summer** since it is often difficult to return to campuses during the fall.
4. Two schools per day. Realistically, you will not learn much if you plan a whirlwind tour. Do not try to visit 22 schools in a week! You are better off visiting fewer schools thoroughly than trying to visit every campus on a 16-college list. A “drive-through” is virtually useless. An interview and tour at two different colleges, along with travel time between them, is almost always enough for one day.
5. If possible, attend some classes and also try to spend some time walking around the campus alone, to taste the flavor of the place. Often, visiting the dining hall and the student center, and listening to students talk, are other good ways to get a sense of the school’s atmosphere. Explore the areas of campus (and the surrounding area) where you think you will spend the most time. Walk around the academic departments that interest you.

6. Take notes! Make it a habit to write down relevant factual information as well as all your personal impressions in a notebook that you keep for this purpose. Careful notes will benefit you in two ways: first, they will help you recall the details of a particular school when you have visited several campuses and they all begin to meld in your head (which they will!); and second, they will prove to be a lifesaver when an interviewer asks you, “Why do you want to attend this school?” or when an application contains a similar question. The “Journal” tab on the Naviance Family Connection is a good place to keep these notes.

7. Even if you are not required to RSVP for a tour or information session, check in with the admission office receptionist when you arrive. You will likely be asked to complete an “Inquiry Card” which officially records your visit. Some colleges consider your campus visit “demonstrated interest.” This piece is more important than you might expect, especially at many smaller, liberal arts schools. All else being equal, some colleges may offer admission to those who have shown the most interest!

8. If you make campus visits during the summer, bear in mind that you can always return in the fall. Colleges offer the opportunity to visit a class, meet with a professor, or have lunch with students. Your mailbox (both electronic and the one next to your driveway) will be full of invitations to fall receptions, visit days, and off-campus interviews. These are great opportunities to learn more about each college and for them to learn about you.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR TOUR GUIDE

Below are some questions you may want to consider asking on the tour. The campus tour is an excellent opportunity to speak with a current student – your tour guide – and get a sense of the college experience from his/her point of view.

1. How large are your classes? How large are freshman classes? Do you meet regularly with an advisor?
2. What has your experience been with the core curriculum or the distribution requirements? Have you been able to explore different academic departments?
3. Where do you study? Is the library a good place to work or study? What hours do students have access to libraries, computers, labs, etc.?
4. Are there appropriate special services available for students with individual needs?
5. What academic experiences are available beyond the classroom?
6. What percent of students live in dorms? Is housing guaranteed for all four years?
7. Is this considered a safe campus? Are there regular patrols, escort vans, emergency phones, etc., if needed?
8. Is this an openly competitive campus? How are tests and exams administered?
9. Do you meet with professors informally? Have you ever been invited to a professor’s home?
10. How tolerant is this community of independence and diversity?

11. What are the most popular extracurricular activities here?
12. What leadership positions in this community do men hold? Women?
13. What do you like best and least about being a student here?
14. Are there single-sex dormitories? Substance-free dorms? “Quiet” dorms? Any thematic housing? Are there laundry facilities in each dorm?
15. Is there an infirmary on campus? How is it staffed? Is there a college physician with an office on campus?
16. Is there a career guidance service on campus? A placement service? Is the placement service available to alumni?
17. What kinds of internships are available for students?
18. Does social life revolve around the campus, or do most students leave on the weekends? What are the major social activities?
19. What is the role of athletics on campus?
20. What is the biggest campus issue currently?

At the end of your visit, ask **yourself** one very important question:

“Do I see myself fitting in here?”

THE INTERVIEW

Some colleges require an interview, some recommend one, and others leave the matter up to the candidate. In all cases, if the school does offer interviews, it is a good idea to have one. Some institutions may not offer one-on-one interviews, but only group information sessions. If this is the case at one of your schools, schedule yourself for one. You can then plan your campus tour around the information session. Some other advice:

- **Be punctual:** Make sure that you have allowed enough of a time cushion to accommodate missed turns, traffic jams, or foul weather. If, despite your best efforts, you are still going to be late, call the admission office to inform them of your situation. Assuming you are on time, an admission officer will probably come out to the waiting room to meet you. Shake hands while maintaining eye contact. If your parents are with you, **you** should introduce them clearly by saying, “This is my mother, Dr. Grant, and my father, Mr. Grant.” They will, in all likelihood, **not** be asked to accompany you into the interview. Going by yourself is normal.
- **Relax:** Admission officers are experienced interviewers. They expect some students to be nervous. Relax. Be yourself. Do not try to show confidence with a false display of nonchalance. You will probably find, after the first few minutes, that you are quite at home in the presence of the person who is eager to help you think soundly about your future education. If, afterward, you do not think the interview went well, you could write the admission officer who interviewed you and explain why you think it did not go as well as you

had hoped. Regardless of how an interview goes, **you must write your interviewer a thank-you note. An e-mail is fine, and it gives the admission person a chance to respond to you.**

- **Be prepared:** Interviews are not only an opportunity for the admission officer to see what you are like and take your measure, but they are also an excellent way for you to learn more about a specific school. You should have read the college's viewbook or visited its website before you go. Avoid asking for information that is easily attainable in the school's literature. Try to ask questions for which there are no straightforward "yes" or "no" answers. As you read a college's material, write down any questions to which you cannot find an answer. A favorite question of college admission officers is, "Why are you interested in attending this college?" While it is a rather general question, you should have prepared a more specific answer than, "I know of the school's reputation for academic excellence." This statement might be true, but you will need to strengthen your answer with specifics such as, "I am interested in child psychology, and I know the department is very strong here." Try, in a word, to articulate to your interviewer why this college is a good fit for you. As in classroom discussions, it will be obvious if you are not prepared.
- **Be yourself:** An interview is a chance for you to showcase who you are and add more personality to your folder. Dress neatly, but not so out of character that you feel awkward. Do not answer questions with simple "yes" or "no" responses. It is fine to offer opinions, as detailed and extended as possible, but, as with dress, they should be in character. Interviewers are likely to press a line of questioning as far it will possibly go. Thus, if you indicate that your favorite hobby is building computers, be prepared to talk about that topic in detail. Also, you are not there to make excuses; you are there to help an admission officer get to know you as a human being. Colleges understand that none of us is perfect, that we all make mistakes and see the world differently.
- **Speak your piece:** Interviews provide excellent opportunities for you to present to the school what type of candidate you are. If any ambiguities or unusual circumstances appear in your application—one low grade or an unusual number of courses in one department, for example—this is a good time to clarify them. For instance, if family problems have affected your studies, you can mention this. You could describe why you moved from an honors section to a regular section in a course. You can highlight unique interests and achievements, such as involvement in the IIP. Never be defensive, and by all means avoid a tone of complaint. Let the facts speak for themselves. You are who you are.

- **Take notes and say thank you:** Never take notes while the interview is in progress, but certainly shortly thereafter, jot down your impressions, ideas, and reactions to the school tour and the interview. If you wait too long, you will recall less. If you take no notes, all the colleges you visit will start to blend together. These immediate reactions often prove invaluable as you ponder your options later on. **Include in these notes your interviewer's name so that you can send a thank-you note upon your arrival home.** Do not be afraid to ask him or her for a business card before you leave. You might even want to encourage your parents to take their own set of notes to use as a point of comparison.
- **Alumni interviews:** Many colleges rely on alumni around the country for help in conducting interviews. If you are given the name of a graduate and told to contact that person or to expect that he or she will contact you, do your best to make the connection—two or three honest tries. If, after that, there is still no response, call or e-mail the college's admission office and explain your situation to them. For alumni interviews, you should follow all the same steps you would for an on-campus interview: be prepared, be yourself, be on time, and remember the interviewer's name. This person will be passing along his or her impressions of you as a person, and those, as we have said, can be very important.

QUESTIONS DURING AN INTERVIEW

Below are sample questions that a college interviewer might ask you:

1. How do you like Lawrence Academy? What has been the most positive experience you have had? The most negative? What would you like to change about Lawrence Academy?
2. What is your role in the school community? What would your teachers say about you as a person? As a student?
3. What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
4. What are you looking for in a school? How did you become interested in _____?
5. What are some of your goals - personal and career - for the future?
6. Tell me about a particular class or assignment in which you found yourself most stimulated intellectually.
7. What is your reason for participating in athletics (or student government, or the newspaper, or the theater, etc.)? What are the satisfactions?
8. Since you are interested in science or math (where appropriate), why are you interested in a liberal arts college rather than a more technical institution?

9. How and in what ways do you expect, plan or hope to transfer your secondary school contributions, achievements, and/or activities to the college level?
10. What has been your favorite subject in high school? Why?
11. What might you study in college?
12. What books or authors have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply in any one author or field?
13. What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far? Who has most influenced you? Why? Explain.
14. What pressures to conform do you feel operating on you at Lawrence Academy? Describe ways in which you “go your own way.”
15. How have you spent your summers?
16. What are your reactions to current events, local, national or international?
17. Describe something about which you have become indignant during the past year.
18. How would you describe yourself as a person?
19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?
20. How do you spend your free time?
21. Why do you think you are a good match for this college?
22. Many qualified students apply to our school. What characteristics single you out from others?
23. What should we keep in mind when reading your application? What are you particularly proud of? Any events or grades that you are not proud of? Why?
- 24. Do you have any questions? (Have some in mind!)**

CAMPUS VISIT MANNERS

When you visit a school, remember that you are representing both yourself and Lawrence Academy. In other words, act naturally but remember that what you do or say may ultimately impact your standing in the admissions office. You will never understand the complexities of each school’s network, so assume that everyone you meet is in some way connected to the admissions process and treat them with due respect. This means dressing appropriately for your visit and conducting yourself in a positive manner: from your initial handshake, to your undivided attention, to your

parting thanks and gracious good-bye. Remember, you have requested to spend time with their staff, so make the most of the opportunity.

THE THANK YOU NOTE

After your visit it is always a good idea to send a thank you note to the person with whom you interviewed. You may meet with more than one admissions representative or come into contact with a professor or department head during your visit. It can never hurt to thank any campus community members that spent time with you. While this note may wind up in your admissions file, at some point along the way, the best reason for doing so reverts to basic rules of courtesy. Especially with the ease of e-mail, a brief note is an effortless way to show your appreciation for an individual's time.

Chapter 5: College Admissions Criteria

What Colleges Consider, and Your Admissions File

Before you send an application to a college you must, as best you can, determine if you meet its admission criteria. Take a hard look at yourself, your academic potential, and your accomplishments. The mere fact that you attend Lawrence Academy—or any other high school, for that matter—does not mean that your college of choice will accept you. Being at Lawrence Academy affords you the opportunity to get an excellent education. What you do with that opportunity is up to you. The more selective a college is, the higher its standards are for admission. The best gauge of how you will do in college is your performance in high school. If you have pushed yourself, colleges will note that. If you have combined SATs of 2400, but have only earned C grades, they will note that as well.

WHAT COLLEGES CONSIDER

1. Colleges will judge you on the courses you have taken and the grades you have earned. Simply meeting LA's graduation requirements will not be enough to make you competitive in the admissions process at many institutions. Most selective colleges expect the ideal applicant to have taken the following courses:

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of mathematics
- 3-4 years of natural science
- 3-4 years of foreign language
- 3-4 years of history and social science

While colleges like to see Honors and AP courses in a student's program (if the high school offers them), you should not get in over your head. Accept your limitations as well as your strengths. Nothing is gained on the college admissions front by taking an AP or an Honors course and receiving a C or a D.

2. Make sure that you have taken the specific courses and tests required by the institution to which you are applying. For example, to apply to engineering colleges, you should take four years of math through Calculus, Physics (Honors if recommended), and the Physics Subject Test.

3. A stellar academic record alone will not ensure your admission to the most selective colleges. What else can you bring to the college: athletic, musical, or artistic talent, uncommon intellectual pursuits, research experience, diversity?

4. Although test results are only one factor in the selection process, they are important. As a rule, the more selective the college, the more important are the test scores. Do your scores fall within the range presented by most successful students to an institution? If they are below that range, are you being realistic?

YOUR ADMISSIONS FILE

When an admissions committee opens your file, they will find the following in it:

Your official transcript

Your official transcript from Lawrence Academy will list all your courses starting with Grade 9 (or the year you entered Lawrence), and your term-by-term grade point average. If you entered the Academy after Grade 9, we will send a copy of your former school's transcript as well. Standardized test scores are not included on the transcript. In assessing your success, colleges will consider the rigor of your courses within the context of Lawrence's curriculum, time on the Honor Roll and other academic awards or distinctions. Improvement in the later years is helpful, but it will not remove the stigma of a poor record in the first three years.

Completed application and essay

The application will include all personal information, extracurricular and athletic activities, jobs you have held, and the like. Colleges look closely at your part of the application, particularly, at many schools, the quality of the essay. The overall quality of your application is one aspect of this process that you completely control; take advantage of the opportunity to help yourself. Neatness and spelling count!

Required supplementary materials

Supplementary materials may include a graded paper or an institution-specific essay. These will vary from college to college. Be sure you check with each institution to make certain you have fulfilled its respective requirements. Supplementary materials may also include LD documentation or information on special needs, if applicable.

Two teacher recommendations

You will ask two teachers who have taught you, usually in your junior year, to write on your behalf. Both letters should come from teachers who know you well. You should start to consider teacher recommendations from the first day of your junior year, because you will normally request them in May. Your approach to your daily life at Lawrence Academy will do much to determine the quality of your teachers' recommendations. Unless you are pursuing a program in the arts, colleges may not accept a recommendation letter from an art, music, dance or theatre teacher. Be sure to research each college to familiarize yourself with their requirements.

Counselor Statement

Your folder will include a detailed statement from your college counselor about your work, growth, and involvement both in and out of the classroom at Lawrence Academy. Counselors will present a balanced view of you and your record in as positive a light as possible.

Independent Immersion Program

Students who are involved in the IIP are responsible for serving as the liaison between the College Counseling Office and the IIP Director (as well as professional sponsor). The IIP director must be made aware of application deadlines so that he can assist with the completion of the IIP contract and term evaluations. When evaluating the college application for IIP students, admission representatives will be looking for academic depth in the contract and program description. They are looking for specific authors, concepts, and terms so that they can understand the academic nature of one's senior year at Lawrence Academy.

Interview notes

Many schools view your request for an interview as a sign of interest, and this interest can benefit you in their appraisal of your application. However, other college admission offices offer interviews as a way for you to evaluate the school rather than as a means to evaluate you. Regardless, the impression you leave in an interview may become part of your application folder.

Additional recommendations

You may wish to include additional notes or recommendations from coaches at Lawrence if you are an athlete or from an activity leader if you excel in another area outside of the classroom (music, dance, and the like). Never send extra recommendations without first discussing it with your counselor. Some colleges simply do not want them!

Lawrence Academy profile

The colleges will receive a profile of Lawrence Academy describing relevant aspects of the school, our curriculum, and our academic statistics (average SAT scores, grade distributions).

Test Scores

The SAT Reasoning Test is required by most colleges. Some also require certain SAT Subject Tests. You must always check with the colleges to find out which tests they want; do not rely on guidebooks or other "outside" sources for this information! Even the Naviance Family Connection, though generally very accurate in this regard, may contain a few errors.

Talk with your counselor about which Subject Tests to take and when. Math Level I, for example, should be taken near the end of Math 3. Others will depend on your individual strengths and needs and upon the requirements of individual colleges. Check with them early in the process!

The ACT (college admission test of the American College Testing program) is basically a competitor of the SAT, designed somewhat differently. It is accepted in place of the SAT Reasoning Test (and, usually but not always, the Subject Tests) by all colleges. For many reasons, not the least of which is that some students score higher on it than they do on the SAT, **we very strongly recommend that every Lawrence Academy junior and senior take the ACT, more than once!** It is given at Lawrence Academy in December and February and at Fitchburg High School and other local centers several other times per year. We also strongly recommend that students take the optional

ACT Writing Section, as many colleges require this section if you submit the ACT rather than the SAT.

From the fifteen or twenty pages of your application folder, an admission committee will get to know you quite well in a very short time—well enough to decide whether to admit you, deny you, or place you on a waiting list.

Chapter 6: Creating the Application

Options and Deadlines, The Application, Who Sends What, Applying Online, and The Essay

OPTIONS AND DEADLINES

For every application you complete and intend to send there will be schedules and deadlines to which you must adhere. **Note that in general, a deadline is the date by which an application must be sent, physically or electronically.** However, for a few colleges, the deadline is the date by which the application must be **received**. If in doubt, call the admission office well ahead of the deadline and ask. **As a general rule, you should treat all deadlines as if they were the receipt date. Doing so will help ensure that you get everything in on time.**

The different possibilities are defined as follows:

Regular Admission

Under a regular admission schedule, you apply by a certain deadline, usually between January 1 and March 1, and are notified of a decision on or shortly after a specific date, most often between March 15 and April 15.

Rolling Admission

Colleges that use rolling admission will review your credentials shortly after they are received (usually not before the end of the first high-school marking period of the senior year), and will notify you of its decision within a few weeks. You normally do not have to tell the college whether you will be attending until May 1. As a rule, the stronger your credentials, the earlier you may receive a letter of acceptance. Note that in these competitive times, many rolling admissions institutions become more selective as the year goes on. It may be best, therefore, to apply early in the year. Always check with your counselor about timing.

Early Decision (and Early Decision II)

Students who return for their senior year planning to “go ED” have one college that they have researched and are absolutely sure they would like to attend. The Early Decision deadline is much earlier than the regular one, often November 1, and the student is usually notified of the college’s decision one month later. Because of this early deadline, you must keep in mind that colleges will not see fall term grades before they render an admission decision. Their decision will be based on grades through the end of your junior year. If your junior year grades are not as strong as you would have hoped, you should discuss the ED decision with your college counselor. It may be wise to wait until fall term marks are in and apply ED Round II, if it is available.

One of three decisions is possible: Accept, Defer, or Deny. An accepted student is ethically committed to attending the college and must withdraw any other active applications. Students who are deferred are simply put back in the pile and looked at again with the regular pool of applicants. If deferred, they are no longer committed to attending the college should they be accepted later in the year. Some colleges have a policy of denying Early Decision applicants they deem unqualified. While an outright denial can hurt, it does relieve the anxiety of having to wait another four or five months for a decision. Obviously, a student may submit only one Early Decision application at a time. However, several institutions have ED I and ED II deadlines for students who were not ready to submit an Early Decision application earlier in the year. Other institutions have Early Decision deadlines that are relatively late—for example, January 1—which serve the same purpose as ED II. Early Decision candidates must be ready to apply to other colleges immediately in the event that they do not receive an acceptance of their ED application.

Unfortunately, many colleges now use Early Decision as a marketing tool, designed to make them look more selective. In a nutshell, the result of this practice is that many institutions are somewhat easier to get into when one applies early. It is essential to ask admission offices about their ED policies in this regard. If you do not get a satisfactory answer—which sometimes you will not—speak with your counselor before making any commitment.

Early Action

This plan is similar to Early Decision except that there is no commitment on the part of the student to attend if accepted. You may apply Early Action to more than one school, with the exception of a few institutions that follow a “Restricted Early Action” policy. With these, you may apply EA to more than one school, but you may not submit an ED application at the same time.

Since colleges change their application plans constantly, it is imperative to check with each school before submitting an application.

College Counseling Office’s “INTERNAL” deadlines:

- **Early Decision:** You must make your request for an early decision mailing **in writing** to the College Counseling Office at least two weeks before the college’s deadline. This means that for a November 1 ED deadline, you must inform us by October 15.
- **Regular:** For all other colleges with specific deadlines, you must inform us **in writing** that you are applying at least two weeks before the deadline.
- **Rolling Admissions:** Materials may be submitted any time after the first trimester (late November) and will be processed within two weeks. Important: You may be pressured by some admission offices into sending in a rolling admissions application as early as possible, even in October. **Doing so is not always in your best interest. Always consult with someone in the College Counseling Office before you ask us to send a transcript early.**

If you make your request late, we will do our best to get materials out on time. However, we work on a first-come, first-served basis, so if we have a great many applications to process, those submitted late will be sent last.

Your intention to apply to a given college or university must be communicated **in writing** to the College Counseling Office, as must any subsequent changes to your list. Simple forms for this purpose are available in the office. Only by using these forms can we keep an accurate and updated list of where to send your materials on time. Failure to keep the College Counseling Office informed in a timely fashion can result in an incomplete application and eventual denial of admission.

THE APPLICATION

A megabyte or two of electronic information, a few sheets of paper: this is your application to college. In a very real sense, this “package” is an extension of yourself, for its purpose is to represent you before the admission committee at each college or university to which you are applying. Because it must do such an important job, your application needs to be put together with great care and attention to detail.

For a large majority of seniors, the college application is the **Common Application**, a document designed and accepted by about 400 colleges and universities, with more schools joining the Common Application organization each year. You can log onto **www.commonapp.org** and see a listing of the colleges that accept the Common Application. (While you’re there, create an account; you’ll need it when it comes time to work on the application itself.) The chances are very good that most of the schools you apply to will accept the Common Application. However, almost all of those that do not (the list includes most state colleges and universities), have an online application of their own.

Many schools that accept the Common Application also require their own supplement, which may be a short questionnaire (“Why do you like our college?”), a set of specific shorter essays, another long essay, or a graded paper with teacher comments. Be certain to check the requirements for each school to which you apply; the Common Application website has the information and the supplement forms. Some supplements are completed online; others must be downloaded as PDF files, filled out and sent in the mail.

One note on completing supplements: One of the most common questions on a supplement is “Why are you interested in this institution?” or some variant such as “Explain how this institution will serve your needs, academically, extra-curricularly and personally.” These are very hard to answer unless you have gotten to know a school fairly well before applying. Herein lies the importance of taking good notes when you visit a campus! They will be lifesavers when you have to write about why you love a college you saw three months previously on a tour of ten schools. If you have not visited, do as much research as possible online and in reference books, and talk with your counselor. We can usually help you with these questions.

Though a few students still complete and mail paper applications (mainly because a few institutions still require them), the overwhelming majority of you will complete and send **electronic forms online**.

Whether you use the Common Application or a college's own form, you will find that their components are quite similar. Here is some information on the different components and how they get to college admission offices.

WHO SENDS WHAT?

Applications have two parts: “yours” and “ours.” You have your responsibilities to fulfill, and the College Counseling Office has its own for each school to which you apply.

You are responsible for sending the following parts of your application:

- Your personal information (the application)
- One or more essays (the personal statement)
- Various types of supplements (a college's own essay question, a graded paper, a peer reference) if required
- Early Decision agreement form (if applicable; counselor, parent and student must sign it)
- The application fee
- Your SAT and/or ACT scores **directly from the testing agency**
- TOEFL scores if you take it (see your counselor)

You must notify the College Counseling Office when you have sent these materials. Always send materials at least two weeks before the deadline. If a college uses rolling admissions, you must notify us at least two weeks before you plan to send your materials.

Note: Most applications include forms labeled “School Report,” “Midyear Report,” and Teacher Recommendation.” Lawrence Academy does not use these, as we have our own version of each. Simply ignore them when completing applications.

We are responsible for mailing the following:

- Your transcript
- Two teacher recommendations (you are responsible for asking the teachers to write these on your behalf)
- Counselor statement
- Lawrence Academy profile (a brief description of Lawrence Academy, our educational philosophy, graduation requirements, and clarification of programs such as the NGP, CSC, IIP, Winterim, and so on)

Again, you must take responsibility for letting the College Counseling Office know where and when to send these forms. We require that you notify the College Counseling Office, in writing, of your intention to apply to a given school at least two weeks before the deadline. We have specific forms for this purpose.

APPLYING ONLINE

While online applications are generally reliable and relatively simple to fill out, and while they can take considerably less time than their paper equivalents, they pose their own challenges and problems. Here are some things to watch out for:

An online application “lives” on the Internet, not on your computer. Therefore, be sure to save your application every time you log on and work on it! **Just one failure to save can wipe out hours of labor.**

- When you create an **account** for the Common Application or any other online form, write down your user names, passwords and PINs and keep them in a couple of safe places, perhaps one on the computer and one on paper where you won’t lose it. You should also give this information to your counselor. This advice holds for the College Board as well: Save your personal information when you sign up for the ACT or other tests!
- Don’t wait until the last minute to start an online application on the assumption that you can do it in fifteen minutes. You can’t; you will make mistakes, want to change things, etc. So give yourself plenty of time. You should have an online application finished at least a week before you submit it. Then give it a last thorough check before you press the Enter or Return button. (That’s how you submit an online application: One click of a computer key!)
- Plan to have the **Common Application** done **well before your earliest deadline**. You may add colleges to the list of recipients after you have submitted.
- Proofread very carefully, and ask your counselor or a parent to go over the application with you before you submit it. Changes can be made after submission in most cases, but it is not always easy.
- Be sure you have a **credit card** when you submit an application. Though some online applications are free, most colleges charge a fee that must be paid at the time of submission.
- When completing Common Application supplements, be aware of which ones can be sent electronically and which ones must be printed out, completed and mailed. This information is clear on the Common Application Website. Also, concerning supplements, note if a college is labeled “hand in hand.” These colleges require that both your application and your supplement be submitted from the same registration account before your application will be

processed and you are considered an applicant. Most important, if you submit your application electronically to a “hand-in-hand” college, you must submit your supplement electronically as well (it cannot be printed and mailed).

THE ESSAY

Why an essay?

Most colleges and universities require students to write an essay as part of the application (not all—many state institutions do not have this requirement). Why? Because they want to see: a) how well you write, b) as one admission officer puts it, “how students can wrap their brains around broadly based questions,” and c) who you are, in your own words and from your own point of view. Except for possibly the interview, the essay affords your best chance to share your thoughts, insights, and opinions; to highlight your accomplishments; and to convey your maturity and outlook on life. Look at the essay, then, as an opportunity. One dean of admission at a major university likens the application process to building a house, and the essay creates the windows. “It’s what distinguishes you from other applicants; it’s what allows us to see in.” College essays are therefore different from those you write for English, history or other classes. You try to write well and to “wrap your brain around questions” for your teachers, but usually you do not write about yourself.

Some students find it hard, when applying to college, to shift gears and write about a topic that may be close to them personally. The task need not be difficult, however. Here are a few tips, many gathered from admissions people.

Choosing a topic

Some colleges simply assign a topic, such as:

- Describe a person or an event and its importance to you.
- If you had to choose four things to put into a time capsule to be opened in a thousand years, what would they be and why?
- Write about an issue of local, national or global importance and its impact on you.

. Whatever you choose to write about, bear in mind:

- No topic is inherently a “good” or “bad” one. Admission people want to discover something about you that they can’t learn from your transcript or test scores, so write about something that matters to **you**, not what you think they want to hear.
- While there are few “wrong” topics, there are wrong approaches. In general, do not dwell on specific experiences, but on your **perception of** or **reaction to** those experiences. For example, writing a travelogue about your summer trip to France is trite. (“The view from the Eiffel Tower was the most breathtaking thing I’ve ever seen!!!”) Instead, write about something you learned or that truly moved you while you were there. If you can’t do that, find another subject. Some of the most interesting topics are right under your nose, in the little events of daily life!

- Some topics do need to be treated with great care, and avoided if you can't do so. It is very difficult, for example, to write about the three D's: Death, Divorce and Disaster. If you choose one of these subjects, be sure to focus **less** on the events than on **how they affected you**—and **never** wallow in self-pity! Likewise, it is best to avoid sensitive political, social or religious issues such as abortion or the U.S.'s role in the latest war. You never know whom you may offend.
- Good advice from one admission person: Avoid writing about privilege or anything that costs money.

Writing the essay

- Be yourself, and write for yourself; use your own voice. Generally, we are taught to write for a particular group. The college essay has no audience per se except a group of strangers known as the admission committee. With no specific audience, students may compose an essay that attempts to convey an “educated” writer. This approach can result in stilted diction, posturing, and labored prose, rather than writing that reflects energy and spontaneity. The admission director mentioned above encourages students not to be overly cautious. “Real emotion, real feeling has to come through. What we’re trying to do [at our institution] is create a community, and we want to be sure the people we’re placing in it are going to thrive here. Writing about something that reveals more about you helps us in that process.” If you write from the heart about a topic that is meaningful to you, you will be writing for yourself, and, as a result, your essay will be much more memorable to that group of strangers.
- Do not use a thesaurus. You don't ratiocinate or cogitate, for example. You think.
- Don't try to be funny unless humor comes naturally to you and you're experienced—and good—at humorous writing.
- Good writing, as one admission officer put it, is lean, progressive, imaginative, grounded in specifics, energized by apt verbs, and respectful of the reader's intelligence. Tell your story in a way that shows, rather than merely claims, that you have learned or matured through the situation or experience you are describing.
- Your opening sentence needs to “grab” the reader. Admission people read so many essays that an imaginative opening will grab their attention.
- Do not allow family members or friends—anyone—to become involved in the writing process, other than as proofreaders. It will be obvious if someone else wrote the essay for you, and it will work against you!
- Likewise, do not even consider for one moment “buying” an essay from one of the Internet “essay services”! Not only is this wrong in every possible way, but it is extremely likely that you will get caught and your application simply eliminated from consideration.
- Spelling, punctuation, grammar, clarity, and neatness all matter; neglecting mechanics can sabotage an otherwise competent and compelling essay.
- Allow plenty of time to write your essay(s). Edit, re-edit and proofread again and again! If you wait until the last minute, it will show.

Chapter 7: After the Decision

Getting In, Other Information to Consider, Getting Denied, The Wait List, and Gap Year

GETTING IN

- **Step One:** Enjoy the good news, but be sure that you are respectful that other students may not have the same good fortune.
- **Step Two:** Be sure that you let your parents know.
- **Step Three:** Notify the College Counseling Office in writing.
- **Step Four:** Accept the offer if you wish to attend, or write to the school to inform them you will not be attending.

OTHER INFORMATION TO CONSIDER

The Candidate's Reply Date is the date by which you must say either yes or no to a college, and beyond which no extensions are possible. Most colleges have agreed on May 1 as the Candidate's Reply Date unless you have applied and been accepted under the Early Decision plan. However, some do not observe it and will ask you to send a confirming deposit within two or three weeks. If this happens to you, and you do not want to send your money to one college until you have heard from others, you can almost always call or write the college and get an extension, usually until May 1. They may tell you they still want the deposit, but that it is refundable until that time. When in doubt, speak to one of the college counselors. Students should not, however, expect to be allowed to put off their decision until sometime after May 1. Colleges need and have the right to expect a commitment from an accepted applicant at some point, and a May 1 deadline should give most people enough time to make up their minds. Usually, "making up one's mind" involves sending a substantial deposit—several hundred dollars—to the college one has decided to attend. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** may deposits ever be sent to more than one college! "Double-depositing" is wrong and unethical. The College Counseling Office must inform colleges that it has taken place, which may well result in the candidate's rejection by both institutions.

Financial aid information may come with your acceptance letters. Sometimes those letters are sent separately – allow a few days before becoming too anxious. However, if it gets to be mid-April and you still have not received a financial aid package, be sure to let us know and call the college's financial aid office.

You may want to revisit a college. Talk with your college adviser. Remember that the school allows you to miss three days to visit colleges.

Do not make quick selections if you are fortunate enough to have several college choices. Talk with your parents and college counselor.

Remember that all offers of admission are contingent on a continued strong performance. Disciplinary infractions or academic performances that are a departure from your record could put you on probation at a college freshman year or, worse, could cause the college to revoke your acceptance.

GETTING DENIED

It is never easy to face rejection. However, remember the reason why you created a balanced list of colleges. Most students receive acceptances and denials. You should focus on the schools that recognized your talents and celebrate your acceptance. Your success in the college process will be defined by your college experience not the decisions that you receive from the colleges in the spring of your senior year.

THE WAIT LIST

The waiting list is a form of “insurance policy” used by many colleges as a hedge against the possibility of unfilled places in an entering class. There is no way to predict your chances of admission from the waiting list, as circumstances and conditions vary each year. In almost all cases, wait lists are not ranked; rather, all wait-list students are reevaluated shortly after May 1. The number of wait-list candidates offered acceptance depends upon the number of places still to be filled. You should choose to remain on a college’s wait list only if you are seriously interested in attending that institution. They will have to send a deposit to another college to hold a place; doing so in this situation is not considered “double-depositing.” If interest is not strong, you should remove your name from waiting lists to give your place to someone else. We counsel wait-listed seniors carefully, suggesting specific strategies that may help their chances of admission. Below are a few steps that you should take if you want to improve your chances of getting off the wait list.

- Write to the college and let them know that you would like to remain on the wait list.
- Be sure that you have provided evidence of your potential hooks.
- Provide new grades, a letter of recommendation from a senior year teacher or evidence of recent accomplishments that might not have appeared on your initial application.
- Make sure the college knows that you are ready and willing to accept an offer of admission.

- Continue to show interest in the college, but do not be a pest.

GAP YEAR

One choice that a few students consider each year is to delay entering college after graduation from Lawrence—taking a “gap year.” Colleges and universities almost always support students who do this, because they find that when students return to academic life, they do so with renewed energy, enthusiasm and focus.

If you do consider a gap year, the first thing you must understand is that in all likelihood you will eventually go to college. Therefore, along with exploring alternative-year options, you must plan on going through the selection and application process during your senior year. Why? First, you might change your mind in May and decide you want to start college after all. Second, applying to college as a senior is buying “insurance” for the future; most colleges, once they have accepted you, will allow you to defer attendance for a year. That doesn’t mean you are forced to attend that college, but you do have the option. Third, the application process will be easier for you while you’re still at Lawrence, with the counseling staff available to help you.

Parents often fear that children who do not start college immediately after high school will never go. This fear, while understandable, is unfounded, at least in our experience. To our knowledge, every single Lawrence graduate who has taken time off in the last thirty or more years has gone on to college, usually within a year.

So if a gap year has been on your mind, talk with a counselor about it--and share your thoughts with your parents! The College Counseling Office has information on alternative programs that have been successful for Lawrence Academy students in the recent past, and we can direct you to professional consultants who help students plan such interim periods.

Chapter 8: Paying for College

What is Financial Aid, Applying for Financial Aid, Completing Financial Aid Forms, and Understanding Financial Aid Awards

WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

The subject of financial aid for college is a source of great anxiety for many families. The information here comprises a simple explanation of how financial aid works, suggestions for applying and filling out the required forms, and a few hints on understanding financial aid awards. Here are three things to remember from the outset:

First of all, the time-honored rule still holds: unless you can comfortably afford a college education (which now costs \$60,000 a year or more at some schools) you should usually apply for financial aid. Awards are based on need, and need is not related merely to your gross annual income.

Second, don't avoid applying to private colleges simply because they are more expensive. While it is true that private colleges' tuitions are much higher than those of state institutions, it is also true in most cases that their financial aid programs are proportionately more extensive. Assuming you need financial aid, it may cost no more to send your child to a private college than it would for him or her to attend a public institution.

Third, it is important to understand the difference between a **scholarship** and **financial aid**. A scholarship is awarded to a student by a college or an outside organization because he or she meets certain predetermined criteria: excellent grades or exceptional athletic ability, for example. Financial aid is based purely on need. Here is a more detailed explanation:

Financial Aid

Financial aid is “need-based” as opposed to “merit-based.” In other words, you receive it because you cannot afford to pay all the expenses yourself. Your need is determined by a Federal formula, described below. Each college is now required to make available a “net price calculator” by which a family can estimate how much the cost of attendance will be. The calculator is designed to give you an early estimate of your eligibility for grants and/or scholarships if the student is accepted to that college. Bentley University is an example of a college where the net price calculator is being highlighted as a useful tool. Go to <https://npc.collegeboard.org/student/app/bentley> to see how this works. Always be very careful that the information you put into a net price calculator is accurate, so that you get a valid impression of the ultimate cost of attending that particular college. If you have questions about net price or general financial aid at any particular college, do not hesitate to contact directly that school's financial aid office to ask questions even if your child has not yet filed

an application. Ideally, the student's academic record has nothing to do with eligibility for financial aid, though grades are now taken into account at a good number of colleges as a means of stretching their funds.

Financial aid funds come from the federal government, the college itself, and, in some cases, from state programs. Aid is awarded in a "package" comprised of grant (which you do not pay back), student loan, and work, in varying proportions. Loans are often the largest component, and you, the student, must pay these back starting a few months after graduation. The average student on financial aid can expect to graduate with an average of around \$20,000 in loan debt, to be paid back over about ten years. In rare cases these loans may be forgiven, in whole or in part, if the student enters certain professions after college, such as teaching or nursing in low-income areas. Although need is determined by a federal formula which all colleges will adhere to, that does not necessarily determine how much a college will offer a student in financial aid to meet the cost of attendance. Colleges may "gap" a student, which means that they would recognize the family's need for financial help, but they would not meet that need in its entirety. It would then be expected that the student pick up the difference through loans or other sources of tuition money. Loans are considered to be part of financial aid. If you receive financial aid from Lawrence Academy, do not expect that colleges will offer you the same terms, since the methods and priorities for determining financial aid allocations may be different at the college level.

Institutional Scholarships (awarded by colleges)

An institutional scholarship, often called a "merit scholarship," is awarded to you by a college because you meet certain predetermined criteria, such as excellent grades, exceptional athletic ability, or artistic talent. Not all "merit" scholarships are based on grades; some are awarded for categories as vague as "leadership" or, in one recent case at a Midwestern college, having a "New England heritage."

Merit scholarships usually have nothing to do with financial need. They are either simply awarded to an applicant, or the student is invited to apply for them. Given by colleges as a means of attracting desirable students, they basically amount to tuition discounts. Individual colleges have offered Lawrence students as much as \$20,000 per year in merit scholarship in recent years, though the amount is usually less. If colleges do not mention merit scholarships in their literature, ask about them when you visit, or speak with representatives when they come to visit Lawrence.

Corporate and Organizational Scholarships

Groups such as the Lions and the Rotarians offer scholarships as well. Generally, you should be wary of private scholarships like these if you have financial need. You need to seek out this information early in the application cycle, since scholarship application deadlines can be as early as January of the senior year. The College Office keeps information on many scholarships on file; moreover, there are sources on the Web for free scholarship searches, including **www.fastweb.com**. Be wary of offers that charge a fee to search for scholarships; the same information is available free through your own research.

It is important to understand that no college will award you more money than the system says you need. In other words, if you win a \$5,000 scholarship from the Ancient and Benevolent Order of Raccoons, most colleges will deduct that amount from the money they have awarded you. Some schools will deduct it from the loan portion of your package; often, unfortunately, it is taken off your grant award. Check with each college to find out what they do.

Athletic Scholarships

Very few athletes each year win a “full ride” from a Division I college (occasionally Division II, never Division III). These awards are given for athletic ability regardless of need. Families do not apply for athletic scholarships; coaches will identify potential candidates. (See Chapter 10 entitled “Athlete’s.”)

More information on financial aid is available at the following websites:

WWW.FINAID.ORG

WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG

WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV

WWW.MEFA.ORG

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Paying for college is a family proposition: parents have certain responsibilities in the process, and so do students. It is absolutely vital that everything be done in a timely fashion, strictly according to deadlines. To drag your feet may very well mean that you will end up without aid.

To apply for financial aid at any college, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Some colleges also require the College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Profile (CSS Profile), and, in many cases, their own institutional form. The CSS Profile is online only; the FAFSA may be completed online or in paper form, though virtually everyone now uses the online version. When completed, the FAFSA and the CSS Profile are sent to central agencies to be processed and forwarded to colleges. Families complete only one FAFSA and/or Profile. Institutional forms, on the other hand, are requested directly from each college and returned to its financial aid office. Forms are obtained online or directly from the colleges. Get the colleges involved immediately. They are a helpful resource and it is wise of you to familiarize yourself with an office you may be working with for the next four years.

The FAFSA

The FAFSA is required by every college and university. As the name implies, there is no fee connected to the FAFSA, which determines your eligibility for federal financial aid funds, the backbone of every college financial aid program. It is provided by the U.S. Department of education. The FAFSA is available online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. (Note: do not go to fafsa.com! This is a commercial website that processes the FAFSA for you, for a significant fee.)

Note that the FAFSA is addressed to the actual aid applicant, i.e. the student. However, parents complete the form most of the time, supplying financial information for themselves as well as for their child (job earnings, savings, etc.).

The FAFSA must be filed between January 1 and February 1. If you will not have tax information for the year in time to fill out the FAFSA by February 1, you should contact the colleges’ financial aid offices directly to find out how to proceed. In most cases, they will advise you to complete the

form based on estimates, as there is an opportunity to make corrections later in the process. Parents who own their own business may have to fill out additional forms.

The CSS Profile

The College Scholarship Service Profile, or CSS Profile, is available by mid-October of a student's senior year; there is a fee for this service. It is required by over 250 private colleges/universities, in addition to the FAFSA. The Profile is available at www.collegeboard.org. Because we have found inaccuracies in the listing of colleges that accept this document, you should check with each college to verify if they do, in fact, require the Profile. You should register with the Profile online at least three to four weeks before your earliest financial aid deadline.

Institutional Forms

Some colleges use their own supplemental forms, which usually ask a few specific questions not covered on the FAFSA or the Profile. These are available only from the college, usually on its website, and are returned directly to its financial aid office. Obtaining these forms is your responsibility.

In general, always call a college's financial aid office if you have questions about financial aid at a particular school. Never rely on second-hand information.

COMPLETING FINANCIAL AID FORMS

Online completion is much faster and is strongly recommended for the FAFSA; it is required for the CSS Profile. Families who need to send a paper FAFSA may call 1-800-FED-AID [433-3243] or download a PDF version from the FAFSA website.

Before starting the FAFSA, be sure to visit the FAFSA website's help section to see what documents you will need and obtain answers to questions you may have. Here are a few other tips:

- Round all figures to the nearest dollar.
- Use proper names, not nicknames, and make sure the Social Security number reported matches the one on the student's card.
- If the instructions tell you to skip a question, leave it blank. If your answer to a question is "none" or "zero," put a zero in the answer space.
- Do not date or submit the FAFSA before January 1. Do submit all the forms at least two to three weeks prior to your earliest financial aid deadline. If you do not have the required tax forms in time to complete the FAFSA, estimate your figures as closely as possible for the current year. You will have the opportunity to correct the figures later when you know the exact amounts (see #9 below). Make a copy of all forms for your records. Also, be sure to keep a record of all PINs and account numbers.
- Your FAFSA will be processed faster if you put in the correct, 6-digit Title IV Code and the name of the college in the appropriate place. These codes are not the same as the College Board 4-digit codes used on the CSS Profile. You may list the college and its address

without the code, but make sure you have the correct city (for example, Boston College is not in Boston!). The FAFSA allows you to list only six colleges. If you are applying to more than six, first list the schools with the earliest financial aid deadlines. Within a week you will receive an e-mail informing you that FAFSA information has been sent to those colleges. You can then go back online, delete the original six colleges, and add the rest of your list.

- Within about a week of receiving your electronic form, you will be able to log on with a PIN and see your Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR will provide you with a figure called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). It may also request additional information. Colleges receive a SAR at the same time you do; it is used in determining your eligibility for aid.
- If you made mistakes on the FAFSA, you may correct them after the form is initially processed. See the FAFSA website for details.
- Mail paper forms in the separate envelopes provided for each form. DO NOT express-mail your forms or send them via certified mail (return receipt). Doing so will slow down the processing of your forms.
- For questions about the status or the processing of an application or to request duplicate copies of your SAR, call 319-337-5665.

Early Decision Applicants

Some colleges are reputed to save financial aid dollars by “under-funding” Early Decision applicants on the theory that if they want to attend badly enough to apply ED, they will find the extra money. Your need for financial aid should not discourage you from applying Early Decision, but bear in mind that you will not be able to compare the cost of attendance at different colleges if you apply ED and are an aid applicant. We have often found that these students receive the same aid packages as regular decision applicants. Many selective colleges, including the Ivy League, have gone on record to say that early applicants receive the same treatment from the financial aid office as anyone else. It is nonetheless important to ask about ED financial aid policies if you will be applying for aid.

Divorced/Separated Parents

It is important for divorced parents to understand that no one will be penalized simply for being divorced. According to the FAFSA website, the student should file financial information only for the parent with whom he or she lived the most during the past year. If the student divides his or her time equally between both parents, then information should be provided for the parent that provided the most financial support. If there are different or unique cases, or if you have questions about who should file, call a college financial aid office directly to clarify.

UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

Financial aid letters may accompany letters of acceptance; often they are sent separately. When letters are sent early in the year, some colleges may not specify the exact amount of state and federal aid they are offering you, but rather an estimated award. You will receive exact figures in another, later letter. Here are suggestions on how to read and respond to a financial aid letter:

- Look at the combination of awards in the “package.” It will consist of two types of aid: “gift aid” (such as grants that do not have to be repaid), and “self-help” (usually a combination of work and student loans).
- In comparing your different packages, pay attention to two things: your net cost to attend each institution after financial aid, and the proportion of grants to loans. Do not be dazzled by the total amount of money a college offers you; focus on how much you will have to pay out of pocket for four years at that college, both as tuition expenses during your college years and as loan payments afterwards.
- Look for special conditions or requirements attached to your awards. For instance, some institutions require financial aid recipients to maintain a certain grade-point average in order to continue receiving aid. Be sure you call the college and ask about the conditions before you pay your enrollment deposit.
- Be aware that most need-based awards (this is what “financial aid” is, after all, need-based) involve Federal money for both grants and loans. Financial aid administrators must adhere closely to government guidelines in awarding federal dollars, and few colleges have enough to meet every applicant’s full need. Even though your need is entirely legitimate, colleges may, for various reasons, award larger packages to other students.
- If you are offered a Federal loan, it will be “subsidized” or “unsubsidized.” A subsidized loan does not accrue interest while the student is in college; an unsubsidized loan does.
- If you are a recruited athlete, be aware that coaches cannot promise financial aid! They can work on your behalf in the financial aid office, but the final aid offer is always up to that office, not the coach. Therefore, beware of promises made before you receive a formal financial aid offer.
- If you have questions about your financial aid award, or if you or your family believes that it does not meet your needs, call the college’s financial aid office. Be polite; do not panic or become angry. You will find that most financial aid officers are very helpful. Review any circumstances you think may have been overlooked, and be prepared to offer concrete information if you want them to review your award. The college may be able to adjust your package based on new information, or they may match an offer from another college. Not all colleges will negotiate financial aid awards, however; each institution has different priorities and policies.
- If you are considering more than one college, wait to receive a financial aid letter from each school before making a final decision. While every college will ask you to accept or decline their offer of aid by a specific deadline, they will usually extend the deadline upon your request if you are still waiting to hear from other institutions.
- Once you make a final decision, do not miss the reply deadline; if you do, your money could go to someone else! Follow very carefully the instructions in your award letter, which may ask you to provide more information or to select a lender for a student or parent loan. Complete and sign the necessary forms and send it in. Be sure to notify the other colleges that accepted you that you will not be attending.

Know your deadlines! They vary from college to college, so read admission materials very carefully, and stay on track from the beginning. A student who does not need financial aid may have a bit of flexibility.

Chapter 9: International Students

Applying to College or University in the United States

APPLYING TO COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

If you are an international student, you have many opportunities in the college system within the United States, but you also need additional information specific to you. Failure to familiarize yourself with the details could stall the process. Any questions should be directed to the college counselors or the director of international students.

Applications

You can usually use the same application forms as U.S. students, but some colleges have separate application forms, or supplemental forms, for international students, even those who have attended a U.S. secondary school such as Lawrence Academy. You should find out which application materials are appropriate for you at each college.

Proof of English Proficiency

Colleges usually require that international students take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) because they need to be assured that a student has sufficient English proficiency to succeed at the college level. As for TOEFL scores, almost all colleges look for a score over 550 on the paper-based test, 213 on the computer-based test, or 80 on the internet-based test. The most selective colleges have higher standards. It is important that you research the average minimum TOEFL scores for the colleges in which you are interested. Information can be found on each college's website, which is the best source, or in The College Handbook's Foreign Student Supplement, published by the College Board. It is important to look not only at requirements for the overall TOEFL score, but also to see if there are minimum scores for each sub-test. Some colleges will accept a particular score on the critical reading section of the SAT as proof of English proficiency. You should still take the TOEFL, however; a high score can help strengthen your application.

Certification of Finances

In order to obtain a visa to attend a U.S. college or university, international students must certify in writing that they have enough money in the bank to pay for tuition and other expenses. Some

colleges require this documentation with the application; others request it only if the student is accepted and decides to enroll. Colleges have a form for this purpose on their websites, and most ask for an original copy of a statement from the responsible parent's bank verifying the amount of money available, in dollars. It is essential, therefore, that, at the beginning of the application process, every international student find out what kind of documentation each college requires, and make sure all appropriate forms are completed correctly and on time. Talk with your college counselor to make sure you understand what you need and when you need it.

Note that without a certification of finances, colleges will not issue an I-20 form!

Financial Aid

At most, but not all, American colleges, international students are not eligible for need-based financial aid. All student aid from the Federal Government is reserved for U.S. citizens, though a few institutions have private financial aid funds available for students who are not U.S. citizens. Your counselor will have a list of these schools.

Some colleges offer merit scholarships (that is, awards not based on financial need) to students with exceptional academic, athletic, or other ability. You may be eligible for these scholarships. Students do not generally apply for these grants. Instead, the college might offer them upon receipt of the application. You should check the colleges' websites to find out if they have merit scholarships for which you might be eligible, and find out if consideration for such scholarships requires an earlier application deadline.

General Information

Before finalizing the list of where you will apply for admission, you should try to determine, together with your counselor, how well your academic qualifications match up with those of previously successful applicants from Lawrence. The final list must include some institutions where your chances of acceptance appear to be very good, as well as colleges where you are less likely to be accepted. If a college has a large pool of international applicants, your chances of acceptance may be less than the chances for a U.S. student at that school.

Some colleges offer ESL and language support classes for the student whose language skills are not quite ready for the rigors of college work. If you have a low TOEFL, or a TOEFL sub-score that is below a college's minimum, some colleges offer a transitional program in which you would primarily take language and composition with a few other courses. In this type of program, it would usually take more than the traditional four years to graduate. The vast majority of Lawrence Academy's international students are successful in our regular English program and do not need this type of support.

Many opportunities for college admissions in the United States exist for international students. You do need to do some extra research, stay very organized, and work closely with your LA college counselor.

Chapter 10: The Student-Athlete

If you are potentially a college-level athlete, the whole college application picture may be quite different from your peers. In some ways, the process can become simpler than it is for most other students; in others, however, it is fraught with pitfalls. Remember, playing sports at Lawrence Academy does not guarantee that you will be recruited at any level. If you are not a recruited athlete, your sport may not play a significant role in admission. Here are some questions often asked by aspiring college athletes and their parents.

Where can athletics help me get in?

First and foremost, be honest with yourself and decide early in the process how important sports are to your college experience. If you believe you must have a legitimate chance to play your sport in order to enjoy college, then you must adjust your college list to reflect your academic record and athletic ability.

If a college coach comes to look at you, and if the coach decides that you are a strong candidate for a college team, then – and only then – can you assume that athletic talent may be a significant factor in getting into college. If you are not recruited, athletic ability will play no more nor less important a role in the admission decision than any other seriously pursued extracurricular activity. Period. Either way, the admissions office will make the final decision, not the athletic department or the coach. Colleges have clear academic standards for athletes; there are limits to how far they will “bend.” No college will accept a student on athletic ability alone if it does not think the applicant can do the work.

Athletics at the college level is a business! Coaches are hired and fired because of winning and losing records. Therefore, it is crucial to remember that the college coach is a “salesperson” who cannot always back up promises. No college coach can guarantee a student’s acceptance to college or playing time once enrolled. A coach’s influence varies at each college for each sport.

Who recruits?

Athletes are recruited at all levels of college athletics. However, the N.C.A.A. and the colleges put restrictions on each level of sports (Division I, II, and III). The N.C.A.A. guidelines for recruiting, as well as the N.C.A.A. Eligibility Center form required of all Division I and II student-athletes are available at www.ncaa.org. It is your responsibility to know the recruiting rules. Student-athletes can

contact a coach during the junior year, but college coaches cannot call students until the summer (July 1) before the senior year.

Here are the several stages of recruitment:

- Form letters (sent to thousands of athletes)
- Personal letters (handwritten)
- Many phone calls from coaches/personal emails
- Scouting (the coach attends a game)
- Home visits from coaches
- College overnight visits. (Division I colleges offer five paid visits; many Division II colleges also offer some paid visits. Division III schools do not have official visits)

You can get a good idea of the coach's level of interest from the intensity of recruiting efforts. It is important to remember that athletic ability determines how much support the college coach will give you in the admission office. Sometimes, if better players come along, the coach may rescind earlier promises of support in the admission process. The Lawrence Academy coaches can usually find out your standing on a coach's recruiting list by asking how serious the college is and what your chances of playing are, but there are no guarantees. However, if you work closely with the College Office and seek the advice of your coaches, you can find the college that is right both academically and athletically.

Who is a Division I athlete?

Quite simply, college coaches make that determination— not you. Thus, if sports will be an important part of your college life, you should have a good, serious talk with your Lawrence Academy coaches early on – during your junior year and again early in your senior year. The elite of the elite (those who will be offered those rare “full rides”) may know by July before their senior year where they are going to college. Other Division I athletes may not know for sure until the spring of their senior year where they will be going. Again, it can be a long process for some Division I hopefuls. Lawrence Academy's coaches can be a good resource when dealing with college athletic departments. You may not always like what you hear from your coaches, but it is definitely in your best interest to heed their advice. If you want to play college athletics, it is crucial to match your athletic ability with a college to which admission chances are realistic and at which making the team is likely. In the final analysis, Division I colleges seek only the elite athletes. Division III colleges combine studies and athletics in a more balanced fashion. Be honest with yourself now, and you will enjoy your college experience later.

What about athletic scholarships?

Scholarship money can be awarded to a student who has a special talent or who meets certain criteria, regardless of financial need. It can be taken away if the student ceases to meet those criteria, whether athletic or academic. The same holds true for many Division II colleges; the same scholarship rules apply. Division III colleges offer no athletic scholarships. Financial aid at this athletic level is awarded based on need only.

Do all Division I and III colleges offer athletic scholarships?

No. Only certain conferences such as the Big Ten, the ECAC, the ACC, and the Big East have athletic scholarships, and then not even in all sports. The Ivy League does not have athletic

scholarships. All financial aid at Ivy League colleges is based on need only. As in all aspects of your college search, you will need to research the athletic scholarship component of your application.

What is the NCAA Eligibility Center?

The N.C.A.A. Eligibility Center was established to determine academic eligibility for student-athletes in Divisions I and II. All students with an interest in Division I or II programs, and especially those interested in making official visits to colleges in the fall of the senior year, should register online with the Clearinghouse before leaving at the end of the junior year. If you have ever attended another high school besides Lawrence Academy, you will have to pick up a form to be completed by that school as well. These forms are used to certify your academic eligibility according to the core set of courses required by Clearinghouse standards. The Clearinghouse has a formula that looks at your test scores and then confirms that you have a corresponding minimum GPA for those scores as well as the right number of classes.

Both the Ivy League and the Patriot League have established a formula similar to that of the Eligibility Center, known as the “Academic Index,” which takes into consideration your SAT and Subject Test scores, or your ACT, and your GPA. If you do not meet that index, regardless of athletic ability, you will not be admitted to an Ivy League or Patriot League institution. If you meet the Academic Index, you will have met Clearinghouse requirements, but not necessarily vice versa.

With no athletic scholarships, how do the Ivy League and Division III colleges attract their athletes?

At these schools, in addition to their strong academic reputation, coaches will often use what is called a “squeeze play.” If they really want a student-athlete who meets their respective institution’s academic standards, they will tell that athlete that if he or she applies Early Decision, then the coach can get them in. What does this mean? Usually coaches in these situations will follow through on what they have said, as their own credibility is at stake. A situation like this will require a student to make a commitment to that institution. For instance, if Brown is your first choice, but the Wesleyan coach makes the ED “squeeze play,” you have a decision to make. Is Brown really your first choice or someone else’s? By putting off Wesleyan Early Decision, you run the risk of not being admitted to either! Early Decision is great for athletic coaches and admission offices; they know they will have the student-athlete they want in their classroom and on their teams. You will need to decide if it is right for you. If you think you are in a “squeeze play,” be sure to speak with your Lawrence Academy coach and your college counselor.

What can the athlete do on his or her own behalf?

1. Pay attention to the Lawrence Academy College Calendar. Know deadlines and what is required of you.
2. Think about different types of institutions available: consider location, size, and curriculum as it relates to possible career plans, sports, overall atmosphere.
3. Take the time to create an athletic resume. Provide your history with the sport and all teams, clubs or organizations with you have been or are affiliated. List and explain any special honors or distinctions you have earned; any camps, showcases, or programs you will be attending where a coach might be able to see you play. See a sample resume at the end of this chapter.

4. Respond to all coaches' letters and phone calls if interested. If you are not interested, it is important to politely tell the coach so in writing or over the phone. His or her feelings will not be hurt by honesty! On the other hand, if the coach applies pressure, tell your college counselor.
5. Write or call the admissions office to ask for brochures and an application to be sent to you. Set a time and date for a tour of the campus if possible. Most college coaches will want you to set up your interview with his or her assistance. You can get a tour of any campus without an interview.
6. Athletes (especially spring season) should seriously consider making a game tape in their junior year to send to coaches. Unlike other seasons, by the time senior spring comes around, a student's performance in a sport will have no influence on coaches and, therefore, no influence on admission. This tape does not have to contain full games, but it should show enough for a coach to get a sense of the player's abilities, both on offense and defense, in a game situation. Try not to send a tape that is only a highlight reel. Coaches need to see the athlete within the context of a game or match.
7. Know the NCAA recruiting rules! See your Lawrence Academy coach and/or the NCAA website for more information.
8. Be proactive! Don't wait for coaches to come to you. Recruit them if they do not recruit you. See a sample of a letter at the end of this chapter for how you might introduce yourself to a coach.
9. Remember, historically, your peers have attended some fine institutions; if you are prepared and listen to advice, good things may happen! Relax and good luck!

In Summary

If you are recruited as an athlete, as a few Lawrence Academy seniors are every year, college worries may well be over quite early in the senior year. You will be able to decide among several schools sometime in the fall or early winter. The "downside" of this situation is that colleges' recruitment efforts can become very aggressive, and it sometimes becomes difficult to determine and decide which college fits you best, academically as well as athletically. Here, another good conversation with college counselors and Lawrence coaches can help. We are all here to help you make a decision with which you will be happy when you are 35 or 50, not merely next year, when you wear a college uniform for the first time. For the very large number of our students who love sports and would like to play in college, but who do not have Division I ability, we ask that they listen to the advice and opinions offered by Lawrence Academy coaches and the college counselors. It may be appropriate for some student-athletes to ask a coach to make a phone call or to write a letter of recommendation after the application has gone out. Such a recommendation may help make some applicants more attractive candidates, particularly if they have put most of their extra-curricular energy into athletics. Very few, however, should rely on sports to get them into college; it simply will not happen that way.

Chapter 11: The Artist's Application

If you have focused on visual arts during your time at Lawrence Academy, you are strongly encouraged to create a portfolio of your best work at Lawrence and elsewhere as part of your college application, regardless of whether you intend to pursue your art at college. What you have done to date will set you apart from other applicants, demonstrating an unusual talent and skill. What you show them, if chosen and presented carefully, can only be to your advantage.

Portfolio Format

1. The Dean of Admission of a reputable art school recently noted that technology is changing everything. Many schools require jpeg files, while some ask for a selection of slides documenting your work, usually no more than twenty, submitted in a slide file page. Be sure to do your research and have a clear idea of what each college requires.
2. Each slide should be labeled with your name and a number that corresponds to a printed list accompanying your slides. The list should have a title for each slide, identification of the medium, an indication of size, and a brief description of the project or work.
3. You should also include a brief (half-page, typed) artist's statement that describes your interests and investment in the visual arts.
4. Other formats are possible and may in some cases be advisable, depending on the scope and type of your work and the college you are considering. Consult the college counselors, your advisor, your arts teachers, and the admission offices of your target colleges.

Compilation Procedure

1. Collect all your work from school and elsewhere, from sketchbooks to finished pieces, even from as early as your freshman year.
2. Ask a member of the arts department (the one who knows your work the best) to serve as your mentor for this process, and arrange to store your work. Review your collected works with that faculty member, considering which pieces may be most important and representative of your achievements. You should select about twice the number of pieces that you may finally include in your portfolio. Note: if you hire a professional photographer, he or she will charge either by the slide or by the hour, so the more you ask the

photographer to shoot, the more it will cost you. However, it is not always easy to identify which works will look best in slide format, so a few extra dollars may be a wise expense.

3. Through your faculty contact, arrange an appointment with a photographer late in your junior spring or early in your senior fall.
4. It is best if you can arrange to be with the photographer, at least at the beginning of the session, in order to keep clear what you want and possibly to help with the set-up. It is your responsibility to be sure the portfolio is accessible to the photographer and is clearly defined as to what you want included. The photographer can shoot one set of slides or multiple sets. It may be cheaper to have extra sets made later; ask the photographer.
5. Payment must be arranged directly with the photographer before he or she has photographed your work. After the photographer has billed you for the total, he or she must receive full payment before the slides are given to you.
6. Once you have received the slides, arrange to meet with your faculty mentor once again, review the work, and make a selection of what seems most appropriate. The final selection should be your choice, but take into account the suggestions offered by the faculty member, as they will help you present your talents most effectively.
7. Prepare your slides, the list, and the artist's statement.
8. If you are submitting a portfolio to more than one college, you will need to have duplicates made, which should be done once you have made your final selection.

Final Notes

1. If you are not applying early, you can delay the process somewhat, especially if you are currently enrolled in a class and producing work. The work you have finished should be photographed as soon as you can arrange it – avoid the last-minute rush whenever possible. If you have a significant body of work by the spring of your junior year, you could consider having it photographed at that time.
2. Each fall there is a portfolio review session at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, free for any interested students who want to bring a selection of up to 15 works to be reviewed by representatives from major art and design schools. Why not?

For more information on Visual Arts Admission please click on the ATTACHED

For information on Acting and Musical Theater Admissions please click on the ATTACHED

For more information on Dance Admissions please click on the ATTACHED

Chapter 12: The Musician's Application

If you have focused on music during their time at Lawrence Academy, you are strongly advised to create a recording and a short document outlining your musical achievements at Lawrence and elsewhere. Creating this CD and résumé will showcase your musical abilities and may help to set you apart from many other applicants.

CD Format

1. Colleges differ in what they require for a musical recording. If you intend to major in music, most colleges, universities or conservatories will require an audition. Please check carefully about each school's audition procedure. In many cases, auditions take place in February or early March. These are done either at the school or at regional sessions in major cities. The earlier you register, the better, because spaces will fill up quickly.
2. The recording should be made with the highest quality equipment available, and in the best possible acoustical surroundings. The possibilities may vary according to the instrument or the voice, so ask a member of the music department if you are unsure. You must never, however, "enhance" your voice or instrument electronically. To do so is to misrepresent your talent. If you are unable to record yourself, ask a professional to do so.
3. Choose your pieces wisely, always paying attention to the institution's guidelines. Play or sing selections that will show your talent in the best light. Highlight your strengths. Choose a variety of pieces to demonstrate different abilities. Pieces from different historical periods or pieces with differing tempi, dynamics, and articulations are good choices.
4. Do not make the recording too long. Leave them wanting more. If a piece has three movements, you may want to record only one and then add an additional piece in a contrasting style. You may, in fact, be penalized for recording more than the school asks for!
5. Send the recording to both the college admission office and to the appropriate member of that school's music department. Remember that in many cases, in addition to selecting a school, you are selecting a teacher. If you are a string player, send the CD to the school's orchestra director or head of the string faculty; if a vocalist, to the choral director, etc. Enclose a letter and the résumé outlining your past musical achievements. Follow up with a phone call sometime later to that same music faculty member.

Résumé Format

1. With your recording, enclose a résumé. List your important musical achievements, especially in your secondary school years. These may include work both at and outside of Lawrence Academy.
2. List any awards, competitions, and/or titles that you may have earned. List teachers with whom you have studied and pieces that you have played or sung.
3. Sometimes it may be a good idea to include programs or reviews of your work.
4. Keep your information brief. Highlights of your accomplishments are enough.
5. Along the way, if you need help with any aspect of this process, feel free to ask a member of the music department. They are more than ready to help you.

For information on Acting and Musical Theater Admissions please click on the ATTACHED

Chapter 13. Commonly Asked Questions

When will I start the college counseling process at Lawrence Academy?

You will start to work with our office formally in December of your junior year. We hold monthly college counseling classes and you will meet individually with your assigned counselor.

How will I be matched with a college counselor?

In October of your junior year you will be asked to submit your top two choices for your college counselor. We make every effort to honor your choices. Many times your choices will be based on a prior relationship with one of the counselors as a teacher, coach, dormitory parent or some other contact at the school.

What classes should I take to put myself in the best position when I apply to college?

You should always select classes that are going to challenge you, but not overwhelm you. When colleges evaluate your academic record they will do so in the context of Lawrence Academy's curriculum and the grades you have earned. You always want to take the most demanding classes that you can handle. Be sure that you think carefully about the classes you choose and work to your fullest potential so that you can earn grades that are truly reflective of your ability, because it could be difference between you and another candidate being admitted.

Will colleges care if I drop a course after December or once I have been admitted early?

Yes. The colleges look for students who are consistent and committed. Colleges expect that you will continue with the course of study that you indicated on your application.

Are my grades the only thing that colleges will consider when they evaluate my application?

While grades are the most important part of your application, they are only a piece of your application. Colleges will also consider the rigor of your courses, test scores, if they are required, activities, teacher recommendations and your counselor statement.

Can I hire an independent counselor to help me with the college process?

While there is nothing wrong with hiring an outside counselor, it is probably not necessary. Our office has good experience and knowledge about the college application process. We meet each week to talk about the whole class, and we encourage students to speak with the other counselors, if they feel it will be helpful.

What is the Common Application?

The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application – online and in print – that students may submit to any of the 488 members.

Do colleges prefer their own application over the Common Application?

No, the college and university members that use the Common Application have worked together over the past 35 years to develop the application. All members fully support its use, and all give equal consideration to the Common Application and the college's own form. Many of the members use the Common Application as their only undergraduate admission application.

How many applications does a typical Lawrence Academy student send out?

Over the past five years, the average number of applications that Lawrence Academy students have sent out has been seven. If you do your research and take college visits, we have found that between six and eight applications is a desirable number.

What is the difference between Early Action and Early Decision?

Early Action (EA) is where you apply early to a school and if you are accepted you are not obligated to matriculate there. Early Decision (ED) is where you apply early to one school only. If you are accepted, you must go there. In short, EA is non-binding and ED is binding.

How will I know if I should apply Early Action or Early Decision?

You should visit multiple colleges so that you know that the school you will be applying to EA or ED is the right fit for you. You should talk with your counselor to determine if your academic record and other credentials will make you a competitive applicant. If you need financial aid, you should think carefully about applying to a school ED.

Should I specify a major on my application or is it better to write undecided?

If you want to major in any science, Engineering, or Business, you should have the standardized testing and grades in those disciplines to support your intended candidacy. These majors attract some of the strongest students in the country, so you will have stiff competition right away. If you are certain that those are the areas of interest or specialization for you, speak with your college counselor before declaring a major. If not, being undecided or writing down more than one academic interest is fine. College admissions personnel understand that nearly every college student changes his or her mind about a major at least once – that is why many colleges do not require official declaration of a major generally until the junior year.

Do I have to report major violations that occurred early in my academic career?

If a college asks the question about your disciplinary record, you must answer it honestly. If you have ever been placed on a Level IV contract, you are obligated to notify the colleges. Understand the question applies to your entire high school career- freshman year through graduation.

What are the differences between the SAT and the ACT?

The ACT is an achievement test, measuring what a student has learned in school. The SAT is more of an aptitude test, testing reasoning and verbal abilities.

The ACT has up to 5 components: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing Test.

The SAT has a correction for guessing. That is, they take off for wrong answers. The ACT is scored based on the number of correct answers with no penalty for guessing.

Should I take both the SAT and ACT?

Yes, we strongly believe that in your junior year you should take the ACT and SAT at least once. You should try to identify which test best matches your learning style and test taking skills, and then take that test at least once more.

Does Lawrence Academy offer test preparation?

Revolution Test Prep offers test preparation classes for the ACT and SAT. Information about their programs is sent home in mailings.

What does it mean if a school is test optional?

It means that you have the option of submitting standardized test scores. You should consult with your counselor before making that decision.

Chapter 14: College/University Visit Clusters

The groups of colleges and universities below are by no means exhaustive. These ideas are meant to serve as good starting points when beginning a college search.

Boston/Rhode Island Area

Large, urban universities: Boston University
Northeastern University

Medium colleges/universities: Bentley University
Boston College
Brandeis University
Brown University (RI)
Harvard University
MIT
Providence College
Tufts University

Smaller colleges: Babson College
Emerson College
Emmanuel College
RISD (art school)
Simmons College (women)
Stonehill College
Wellesley College (women)
Wheaton College
Wheelock College

Maine/NH/VT

Large universities: University of Vermont
University of New Hampshire
University of Maine
University of Southern Maine

Medium college: Dartmouth College

Small colleges/university: Bates College
Bowdoin College
Colby College
Middlebury College
New England College
St. Michael's College
University of New England

Central/Western Massachusetts

Large university: Univ. of Massachusetts at Amherst

Small colleges: Amherst College
Assumption College
Clark University
Hampshire College
College of the Holy Cross
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Mount Holyoke College (women)
Smith College (women)
Williams College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Connecticut

Large university: University of Connecticut

Medium universities: Fairfield University
Quinnipiac University
Sacred Heart University
Yale University

Small colleges/university: Connecticut College
Trinity College
Wesleyan University

New York City Area

Large, urban university: New York University

Medium universities: Columbia University
Fordham University
Hofstra University

Small colleges: Barnard College (women)

Eugene Lang College
Sarah Lawrence College
Wagner College

New York State

Large universities: Cornell University
Rochester Institute of Technology
SUNY system
Syracuse University

Medium colleges/universities: Ithaca College
Marist College
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
University of Rochester

Small colleges/universities: Bard College
Colgate University
Clarkson University
Hamilton College
Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Skidmore College
St. Lawrence University
Union College
Vassar College

Philadelphia and Surrounding Area

Large universities: University of Delaware
Drexel University
University of Pennsylvania
Rutgers University
Temple University

Medium universities: Villanova University

Small colleges: Bryn Mawr College (women)
Haverford College
Swarthmore College
Ursinus College

Pennsylvania

Large universities: Pennsylvania State University
University of Pittsburgh

Medium universities: Bucknell University
Carnegie Mellon University
Duquesne University
Lehigh University

Small colleges: Allegheny College
Dickinson College
Franklin & Marshall College
Gettysburg College
Lafayette College
Muhlenberg College
Susquehanna College

Washington DC/Baltimore Area

Large universities: George Washington University
University of Maryland (College Park)

Medium universities: American University
Catholic University
Georgetown University
Howard University (Historically Black University)
Johns Hopkins University
Loyola University of Maryland

Small colleges: Goucher College
St. John's College (Great Books)
St. Mary's College
Washington College

Virginia/North Carolina/Tennessee

Large universities: East Carolina University
James Madison University
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
University of Virginia

Medium universities: Duke University
Elon University
University of Richmond
Vanderbilt University
Wake Forest University
College of William and Mary

Small colleges/universities	Davidson College Guilford College Hampden-Sydney College (Men) High Point University Lynchburg College Roanoke College Rhodes College Sewanee: University of the South Washington & Lee University
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South/Florida

Large universities:	Clemson University University of Central Florida University of Florida University of South Carolina University of Tampa
Medium universities:	Emory University Furman University University of Miami

Small colleges/universities	Eckerd College Flagler College Florida Southern College Morehouse College (Historically Black College - Men) Ringling College of Art and Design Rollins College Spellman (Historically Black College - Women) Stetson University
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Chicago/Indiana/Michigan/Minnesota/Wisconsin

Large universities:	University of Wisconsin University of Michigan University of Minnesota University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana DePaul University Purdue University
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Medium universities:	University of Chicago Butler University Loyola University of Chicago Marquette University Northwestern University
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Small colleges/university:	Beloit College Carleton College
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Kalamazoo College
Lake Forest College
Lawrence University
Macalester College
St. Olaf College

Ohio

Large university: Miami University of Ohio (suburban)

Medium university: Case Western Reserve University

Small colleges/universities: Denison University
Kenyon College
Oberlin College
Ohio Wesleyan University
Wittenberg University
College of Wooster

Southwest/Texas

Large universities: University of Arizona
University of Texas, Austin

Medium universities: Rice University
Trinity University (San Antonio)

Small college: St. John's, Santa Fe

Colorado

Large universities: University of Colorado at Boulder
University of Denver

Small college: Colorado College

Southern California

Large universities: University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)
University of California at San Diego
University of Southern California

Medium universities: Loyola Marymount University
University of San Diego

Small colleges/universities: Chapman University

Claremont Colleges (Claremont McKenna, Harvey Mudd, Pitzer,
Pomona & Scripps)
Occidental College
Whittier College
University of Redlands

Northern California

Large universities: Stanford University
University of California at Berkeley
University of California at Santa Cruz

Medium universities: University of San Francisco
University of the Pacific
Santa Clara University

Small colleges: California College of the Arts

Pacific Northwest

Large universities: University of Oregon
University of Washington

Medium universities: Willamette University
University of Puget Sound

Small colleges: Lewis & Clark College
Reed College
Whitman College

Chapter 15: College Application Calendar

Class of 2014, Class of 2015

Class of 2014

September

- Choose courses carefully.
- Attend college counseling class.
- Update your activities resume in Naviance.
- Continue to research schools and revise list.
- Class meeting on September 11.
- Make sure you know the application requirements for your colleges.
- Ask for teacher recommendations, if you have not already.
- Meet with college representatives visiting Lawrence Academy.
- Work on essay and Common Application.
- Finalize Early Action/Early Decision intentions.
- Notify the College Office in writing about schools to which you are applying at least two weeks before any deadline.

October

- SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests on October 5.
- Senior Parent Dinner on October 3.
- ACT test with writing on October 26.
- Attend college counseling class.
- Continue to research schools and revise list.
- Meet with college representatives visiting Lawrence.
- Work on applications and essays.
- Send November EA or ED applications. (Do not forget to have official test scores sent!).

November

- SAT Reasoning or SAT Subject Tests on November 2.
- Continue to research schools and revise list.

- Meet with college representatives visiting Lawrence.
- Send December EA, ED, Rolling or Regular Applications. (Do not forget to have official test scores sent!)
- For Financial Aid information, obtain FAFSA and CSS Profile information online:
 FAFSA – www.fafsa.org
 CSS – www.collegeboard.com
 General – www.studentaid.ed.gov
- Meet with counselor to finalize list.

December

- SAT Reasoning or SAT Subject Tests on December 7.
- ACT test with writing on December 14.
- Some EA / ED results received.
- Send January EA, ED, Rolling or Regular Applications. (Do not forget to have official test scores sent!).
- Use your vacation to tie up any loose ends with applications, test scores, financial aid, etc.

January

- SAT Reasoning or SAT Subject Tests on January 25.
- If applying for financial aid, complete FAFSA and CSS Profile.
- Send February applications.
- Keep counselors informed of any decisions, new applications, questions or problems.

February

- Send remaining applications.
- Keep counselors informed of any decisions, new applications, questions or problems.
- Keep track of application receipt notices from colleges. Allow at least three weeks after they have been sent for processing. Inform counselors of problems.

March

- Spring Break: Admission decisions begin to arrive.

April

- Most decisions are received by early-April.
- Discuss wait-list strategy with counselor, if applicable.
- Inform colleges where you have been offered admission but you are not going to attend of your plans, in writing!
- **Thank-you notes** to teachers and others who wrote recommendations for you.
- Know **deposit due dates** and submit a deposit at only one school!
- Class meeting with College Counselors.

May

- May 1 -national deposit date.
- Take AP exam(s), if applicable.

June

- Graduation
- Be sure the College Counseling Office knows about your college plans.
- Celebrate!

Summer

- Contact College Board to send AP scores to the college you are attending.

Class of 2015

September

- Check your course selection to make sure it will allow you to take the courses you want your senior year.
- Stay involved! What contributions are you making to the Lawrence Academy community?
- Gather artwork for portfolio (if applicable).

October

- Junior Class Parent Dinner, Tuesday, October 8.
- Junior Class Meeting.
- PSAT: Wednesday, October, 16.
- Register for the January 25 SAT Reasoning Test at www.collegeboard.com (This test is offered at LA)
- Register for either the February 8, April 12 or June 14 ACT with writing at www.actstudent.org (Note that LA only offers the ACT on April 12)
- Fill out the College Counselor preference sheet.

November

- Continue to work hard and stay focused.

December

- PSAT scores received this month (use as study guide for January SAT).
- Attend first college counseling class with College Counselors.

January

- SAT Reasoning Test on January 25. (Test is offered at LA.)
- Begin individual meetings with College Counselor.
- Attend college counseling class with College Counselors.
- Review Beyond the Academy, the Lawrence Academy college guidebook at www.lacademy.edu.
- Student College Questionnaire due.

- Register for the May 3 or the June 7 SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests. (You should discuss Subject Test options with your counselor before registering.)
- Go through ACT preparation booklet.

February

- ACT test with writing on February 8. (Test is not offered at LA.)
- Attend college counseling class with College Counselors.
- Begin to research colleges.
- Plan spring break college visits (Discuss schools with counselor).
- Junior Parent College Day on February 15. Parents and students to attend Saturday morning meeting with college representatives; parent session after the meeting with college representatives.
- International Students: pay close attention to announcements on spring TOEFL dates.

March

- SPRING BREAK: Visit schools! Attend information sessions and campus tours.
- Continue to research colleges and refine list.

April

- Start to save your best graded papers with teacher comments.
- ACT with writing on April 12. (This test is offered at LA).
- Parent Questionnaire due.
- Start thinking about college essay topics.
- Continue to research colleges and refine list.
- Attend college counseling class with College Counselors.
- Start to think about summer plans for visits and interviews.
- Be aware of college fairs in the area (ex: Boston National College Fair, Bayside Expo Center).
- Attend BISCCA College Fair at Milton Academy.

May

- SAT Reasoning Test on May 3 or (perhaps) SAT Subject Tests. (Test is offered at LA.)
- Make sure you meet with your college counselor before the year's end.
- Attend college counseling class with College Counselors.
- Take AP exam(s), if applicable.
- Finish a draft of your essay.
- Begin to make concrete plans for summer visits. If you plan to interview, make appointments early
- Finalize summer visit list.
- Ask two teachers to write your recommendations.
- Course selection--choose your courses carefully! Be sure that you are registered for five courses for each term for your senior year.

June

- SAT Subject Tests (suggested) or SAT Reasoning Test on June 7. (Test is offered at LA)
- ACT on June 14. (Test is not offered at LA)
- Parents receive summer list update.

Summer

- Do something interesting during the summer months such as work or volunteer. These experiences help you understand your interests and passions and can help you better understand what college is the best fit for you.
- Campus visits: tours, interviews and information sessions.
- Continue to research colleges and refine list.
- Register for either the October, November and/or December SATs and ACT (with writing!) before you return to school in the fall. (Note the seats at LA fill quickly so register early!)
- If you hope to play Division I or II sports, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
- Prepare to apply in the fall:
 - ✓ Make a folder for each college to which you intend to apply.
 - ✓ Indicate deadlines, tests required and any additional requirements on the cover of each folder.
 - ✓ Gather all the necessary application materials, including supplements to the Common Application.
 - ✓ Return in the fall with a draft of your personal essay.