



Lawrence Academy

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THE COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

September 10, 2018

Dear parents of the Class of 2020,

We look forward to meeting with many of you at the Junior Parent Dinner on Tuesday, October 2. In advance of that meeting, we thought it would be helpful to send you some information about the college process, and how we will work with your student this year.

To begin formal conversations, we will meet with your student at a junior class meeting on Monday, September 24 and will start our college counseling classes with them in November. Although the fall of the junior year is still early to dive deeply into the college search, we use these meetings to introduce ourselves and to review how we will start to work with them. During our first college counseling class in November, we will hold a series of small group meetings with the class to discuss the “nuts and bolts” of the college search: post-high school options, how to begin researching colleges, how to define personal priorities for the search, and how colleges will review their applications. At these meetings, each junior will be introduced to the 2018-2019 edition of our College Counseling Handbook. This guide is available on the college counseling website at <http://www.lacademy.edu/page.cfm?p=660>. It is designed in a chapter format so you may read about different parts of the search as you begin to think about such topics as campus visits, testing policy and procedure, as well as application requirements and deadlines.

In November, juniors will complete a counselor preference sheet and in early December, we will match each junior with a counselor with whom your student will work through their senior year. We will do our best to match this request but we do have to keep counselor assignments balanced among the four of us. The counselor is responsible for seeing counselees throughout the process, and coordinating the Lawrence Academy portion of the student’s application packet (more information to follow). Please note that throughout the process students are encouraged to speak with any one of us should questions arise.

Right now their priorities need to be focusing on their coursework and registering for the December 1 SAT and the February 9 ACT (information below).

INITIAL COLLEGE LIST & CAMPUS VISITS

Individual meetings with the student’s counselor will begin in January, and will continue through their senior year. We will be working with your students during this time to help them construct a preliminary list of colleges, which they should start to visit over spring break. This is not necessarily a list of the colleges to which they will ultimately apply, but instead it should represent a starting point - a range of schools that your family can begin visiting to see what feels right (large, small, city, suburban, specialized school or liberal arts). We have found that juniors who spend spring break visiting different types of campuses have a better idea of what they are looking for, and are able to spend the summer investigating schools in more detail, with tours, information sessions and interviews.

After we have met with your son or daughter once or twice, we strongly encourage you to arrange a meeting, or at least a telephone conversation, with their counselor before the end of the year. We know that the college search is often as stressful for parents as it is for students, and we are eager to support you in any way we can.

A NOTE ON STANDARDIZED TESTING

The juniors will take the PSAT on October 10, 2018, which closely mirrors the SAT. Students will receive their PSAT scores in December 2018. We have always recommended that students take the SAT and the ACT at least once to see which test best fits their learning style. We recommend that juniors take the SAT on December 1, 2018 and the ACT on February 9, 2019. To help students prepare for the SAT, Summit Education Group will be offering a SAT prep class, which starts on Sunday, September 30. To help students prepare for the ACT, we have asked Summit Education Group to offer a practice ACT on Sunday, September 23 to help familiarize members of the Class of 2020 with the ACT. **If you would like your student to take the practice ACT, please email me at ssheehan@lacademy.edu to reserve a spot.** We encourage all students to take advantage of this opportunity. Summit Education Group will be offering an ACT prep class starting in December 2018 that will prepare students for the February 2019 ACT. It is important to note that if students want to take the ACT prep class they must take the practice ACT on Saturday, September 23. We have enclosed the flyers for both classes.

Information on how to register:

- SAT website is WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG. The Lawrence Academy school code, or CEEB code, as it is sometimes called, is 220940, and the test center number is 22404.
- ACT can be accessed at their website WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG. For the ACT, the Lawrence Academy school code is also 220940. The test center number is 199460. Students should register for the optional writing section.
- Online registration is the easiest way to register for either test, and it is the preferred method. It requires a valid major credit card.
- **Students with a learning difference, who have had a learning profile at Lawrence Academy for at least four months and who have an evaluation that has been done within three years, may apply for accommodations (i.e. extended time) on either the SAT or ACT. Parents should refer to the separate e-mail sent by Nonstandard Testing Coordinator, Meg Whitworth, for details on this process. If you did not receive the e-mail or have questions, please contact Meg at mwhitworth@lacademy.edu or 978-448-1609.**

A NOTE ABOUT TEST PREPARATION

While it is generally agreed that familiarity with the format of the SAT and ACT can improve a student's performance on those tests, there is no one "best" way to prepare for them. Some students do well with no formal preparation; others do their best after completing a formal test prep course.

Both the College Board and the ACT offer test-preparation questions on their websites. These are free, and can be very beneficial to the student who visits the sites faithfully over a period of weeks. Further, both organizations publish booklets containing sample questions and answers and test-taking tips for registered students. These are available for free in the college office; we strongly encourage every student to spend two or three hours with these booklets before taking a test for the first time.

Private tutoring and formal test-preparation courses are widely available. Lawrence Academy has contracted with Summit Educational Group, a nationally based organization, to offer an SAT prep class starting in September 2018 and an ACT prep course on Sundays beginning in December. We have enclosed information on how to register for the test prep classes.

We hope you find this information helpful and, as we often say, it is a privilege to be working with you and your child during this exciting time. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Please save the date! We look forward to seeing you at Lawrence Academy's Annual College Counseling Day on Saturday, January 26. Programming includes a session with college admission deans and an introduction to your student's college counselor. More information will be forthcoming.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Sheehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sean Sheehan
Director of College Counseling
With the College Counseling Staff