



Hsinchu International School

CEEB Code: 69441

College Handbook 2008-2009

Acknowledgments

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To use any parts of this handbook, I ask that you acknowledge the source. Any ideas to improve it are greatly appreciated. Please contact me at davidcarp@yahoo.com.

David Carpenter

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INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE AND CAREER ADVISING

The Self Discovery and College Pursuit Guidance Program

Goals of the Self Discovery and College Pursuit Guidance Program:

1. To provide a developmental framework for assisting students in college and career planning, decision-making, and self-understanding.
2. To help students learn the importance of self-awareness especially as a step towards making major decisions.
3. To help students learn that the more information they have, the better they will be prepared to make decisions.
4. To help students understand that goals should be set and a plan made to assist themselves in moving from where they are presently to where they want to be as seniors.
5. To assist students in their understanding of the importance of responsibility and of quality.
6. To assist parents in their understanding of the college application process.

Dear Student:

One of the basic tenets of our work with students centers upon the idea of having opportunities and making choices. Life is a road filled with decisions. We can allow these decisions to abruptly confront us causing varying degrees of discomfort. Or we can plan ahead, gather information, and look at our choices with a sense of comfort and control. Thus, we can make decision-making a much more pleasant task by looking ahead to see what is in front of us.

Whether you realize it or not, many teenagers usually are not yet well prepared to face the wonderful world of choices that adulthood will bring them. We remember being teenagers who, like most high school students, wanted all the freedoms of adulthood but few of the responsibilities. We needed to make the leap from adolescence to the early stages of adulthood but did not know how to do it. Many of us saw the opportunities of attending college or joining the working world as one way to make this leap. However, we did not realize that simply entering a university or taking a job did not automatically make us adults. We still had a great deal to learn.

The **HIS College Handbook** hopefully will provide one method for you to learn more about being a young adult and making decisions. We will go through a series of workshops and will meet many deadlines whereby you will be given the tools to learn more about yourself in the process of choosing a college or university. It is the process of making the decision which we believe will bring each of you the greatest benefit. Hopefully, you will learn to accept many of the responsibilities that deliver good rewards when met.

As the following letter will explain, the advisor's role in your college/career search is very straightforward. We will work very hard to teach you the skills needed in gathering information and making decisions. We will assist you by teaching the organizational skills and goal setting principles that you will need. It will be much like a class you might be taking but this one centers solely upon you. You will get from this process as much as you put into it. The culmination of all your hard work will be your responsibility and your achievement.

So how do you use this handbook? First, read through every page and begin to get a feel for the process of going from not knowing to knowing. Realize that the more you plan and work ahead, the easier it will be during the very busy junior and senior years. Also, we will take you through a series of workshops that will explain the different sections of the **HIS College Handbook**.

The most important pages of the handbook center upon the college application procedures. The calendars, specifically the senior one, will be your guideline for objectives and deadlines that you will work towards. It is always a good idea to put the dates on your own personal calendar. The remainder of the handbook deals with the "how to" of applying to university/college. Take a few minutes and look over the Table of Contents to better understand how each section is set up to answer important questions in the college application process. Also, please note that we use the terms "college" and "university" interchangeably. In the United States, universities have graduate schools and most colleges do not, yet both terms describe basically the same thing.

This may all seem very overwhelming but in reality it all comes together one step at a time if you follow the calendar. And remember, you are living a special life as an international student. This makes you stand out as a candidate for North American colleges. Admissions counselors will look forward to learning more about your experiences in different cultures. If you are applying to a college or university in Europe or elsewhere, you will still be following the same basic time schedule as those students applying to North American schools. Let's work together and find the schools which will "make a good fit" for each of you.

Best wishes,

Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Sheu, Ms. Galland, Ms. Murthy and Mr. Loken
Junior and Senior Class Advisors

LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents:

We are sending you this introduction to our **Self Discovery and College Pursuit Guidance Program** to assist our parents in learning more about our college placement advisory program. We hope it will help explain our efforts to assist your children as they undergo continuing self-discovery and eventually apply to university.

Our program of workshops begins during the sophomore year and culminates in the senior year when your child is accepted to college. The first workshops will center on the student's individual "self discovery." Moving into the junior year, we will enter the "college pursuit" segment of our workshops where students research prospective colleges and universities. The advisory program will culminate when our students apply their self-understanding to choose the schools that best fit their needs. A main focus of the advisory program is to assist our students in developing many important life skills as they grow into young adulthood.

The advisor's role in the **Self Discovery and College Pursuit Guidance Program** is to be a teacher who will guide your children to learn more about themselves in order to find specific schools and eventual occupations in which they will feel comfortable, fulfilled, and happy. We will also offer the organizational framework, information, and deadlines for your child to follow in order to have the best chance at acceptance to the schools to which he/she will apply. This process involves attending workshops, writing essays, corresponding with colleges, reaching deadlines, and most of all, taking responsibility for oneself. An advisor does not "get students into college" or step out of the boundaries of being an advisor. Students are responsible for their futures and the decisions that go along with being young adults. And hopefully, at the end of the college application process, you will see your child experiencing a feeling of accomplishment as he/she realizes that an important milestone has been reached in his/her life.

It is very important to us that your son or daughter have all the resources needed in applying to a very competitive world of college admissions. We created this resource handbook based upon many excellent sources; it offers a step-by-step process of how to apply for admission to university.

A "team" approach between parents, the students and the advisors will make the process of applying to college run smoothly. By communicating effectively, we will hopefully alleviate some of the pressure on our college candidates and assist them in finding the schools that most fit their interests and needs. Yet while we each have our roles, it is important to clarify right from the beginning that the student applying to college must take responsibility for the process, deadlines, and decisions that go with it. The staff of HIS will offer guidance and information to assist your child in learning how to go about applying to college. But the hard work and decision-making will be fully in the student's hands. When a college admissions counselor looks

over the application of a student, the student's true self should be represented. This means that if a student is disorganized and does not put much effort into written work, then these weaknesses will stand out. It also means that our students who have put a great deal of effort into their work will shine and benefit from their conscientiousness.

The following information lists the goals, important dates, and further details for our Self Discovery and College Pursuit Guidance Program. We are looking forward to helping you and your child whenever we can. Please contact us at school with any questions.

Yours truly,

Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Sheu, Ms. Galland, Ms. Murthy and Mr. Loken
Junior and Senior Class Advisors

OVERVIEW OF THE SELF DISCOVERY AND COLLEGE PURSUIT GUIDANCE PROGRAM

A teacher's job, put in very simple terms, is to take the student from not knowing to knowing. The job of the college advisor is the same. We assist young people in their growth from not knowing a great deal about themselves and what they want to do after high school to the point where they hopefully understand themselves enough to make some major life decisions.

What is the SAT Reasoning Test? What is the difference between a small liberal arts college and a large state university? What type of person am I? Where do I fit in? Where do I need to be stretched? These are just a few of the questions that will be addressed as our students advance through the **Self Discovery and College Pursuit** guidance program. To assist them, we offer a series of five workshops with follow-up meetings, Parent College Planning Breakfast, testing, and individual meetings with the advisors, all of which will hopefully take our students from not knowing to knowing.

Self Discovery and College Pursuit Workshop Schedule

Freshmen Year: We begin in the freshmen year of each student's high school career helping each student increase his/her self-understanding as we look towards the future. Course selection is important not only to assist each student in pursuit of his or her interests but to also to set a course towards post-high school plans. A four-year course plan is drawn up to help the student move toward his/her goals.

Sophomore Year Workshops

Self-Awareness and Assessment Workshop I: (10th graders in October) This workshop is set up to assist the sophomores in furthering their self-knowledge by setting some goals for making college and career decisions. This will be the first step of several towards helping our students make decisions about applying to university. We will work to answer two main questions for each student: In what situation does he/she want to be by the time of graduation from high school? How will he/she get to that place and time?

Self-Awareness and Assessment Workshop II: (10th graders in February) In this workshop sophomores will further their self-knowledge. The students will take interest and value inventories. The students will take the Keirsey Temperament Sorter. The results will be used in further exercises.

Continued--

Self-Awareness and Assessment Workshop III: (10th graders in March) This workshop is designed to assist the sophomores in furthering their self-knowledge. The students will take a personality inventory. The students will review the results from Workshop II.

Junior Year Workshops

College and Career Exploration Workshop: (11th graders in November) This workshop is about gathering information for applying to university. We will examine different sources to find characterizations and application information on colleges and universities. We will also use the College Search computer software program to assist our students in developing their list of "target schools" for application. The juniors will receive their copies of the **HIS College Handbook**.

College Admissions Workshop (11th graders in March) The students will use information from previous workshops to develop a potential list of "target schools" for application. Many students will travel over the summer break to look at prospective colleges before their senior year. It is important that they narrow their choices down and have some type of framework of knowledge when looking at schools.

Other important events during the junior year:

- PSAT (Preparatory College Entrance Exam - October)
- TOEFL (College Entrance Exam for English as Second Language students - Spring)
- SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Test(College Entrance Exams - Spring)
- Recommendation requests (verbal) made to teachers (May); Written (September)
- Develop list of colleges and universities targeted for application (May/June)
- Completion of student questionnaire and activity forms (April)
- Completion of parent recommendation/questionnaire forms for their children (April)

-- Continued--

Senior Year Workshop

The beginning of the senior year will be a busy one for our students as they work to keep their grades up and also apply to colleges and universities. The **HIS College Handbook** will be their guidebook and the advisors and other faculty will be available for questions and assistance. By following the guidelines of our program, the student will hopefully feel comfortable in the knowledge that he or she does not need to be rushed or confused about what to do.

Decision-making Workshop: (12th graders in January) After several individual meetings with the college advisor and probably a second taking of the SAT Reasoning Test, the seniors will meet in one final workshop late in January to learn more about making decisions. The workshop will center upon one model of how to make decisions. The model includes identifying the decision to be made, gathering information, looking at options, etc. up to the point of creating a plan and implementing it.

The previous three years of work and planning should pay rich dividends. The main events of the senior year are:

- Parent College Planning Breakfast (September)
- The SAT Reasoning Test and/or SAT Subject Test (Oct.- Dec.)
- Completing and mailing of college applications (Sept.- Nov.)
- Deciding which college/university to attend upon receiving notification (Spring)

COLLEGE PLACEMENT CALENDAR FOR SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS

The following are deadlines for your actions. Look and plan ahead to meet them

September

17--College Fair at NEHS

--Meet with college representatives when they visit HIS and other schools when college fairs offered.

--Students needing to take the TOEFL should register and take the test before January.

--Register and pay fee in main office for PSAT. Sophomores and juniors.

October

14--**Last day to register and pay fee in the main office** for PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test). Test is offered at HIS on Saturday October 18th at 9:00 am.

18--PSAT offered at HIS at 9:00 am. Bring #2 pencils. Sophomores and juniors.

--Meet with college representatives when they visit HIS.

--**Self-Awareness and Assessment Workshop I** for sophomores.

November

--**College and Career Exploration Workshop** for juniors.

--Juniors to register for SAT Reasoning Test and in some cases the SAT Subject Tests choosing from the following dates: January 24, March 14, May 2, and June 6

February

--**Self-Awareness and Assessment Workshop II** for sophomores.

--TOEFL registration for juniors.

March

14--SAT Reasoning Test offered (no Subject Tests)

--**College and Career Exploration Workshop** for juniors.

--**Junior Questionnaire, Activity Sheet, and Parent Questionnaire/Recommendation** sent home with juniors to be completed.

--**Self-Awareness and Assessment Workshop III** for sophomores.

--Start planning summer personal enrichment opportunities (e.g., job, internships, community service).

April

--Junior Questionnaire, Activity Sheet, and Parent Questionnaire/Recommendation forms to be returned to advisors.

--Juniors meet with advisors to discuss college plans and summer campus visitations.

--Juniors complete plans with your parents about college visits this summer and request by mail for interviews and campus tours at your prospective campuses.

--Juniors take the TOEFL before end of school year.

May

2--SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests offered.

--Complete **resume** for college interviews this coming summer. Work on it with parents.

--Make verbal requests of two teachers for recommendations. Explain that you will give them a written request in September. Juniors only. The principal will write an official school recommendation.

--Develop list of colleges for application to in the fall.

--Request a copy of your transcript from office if you plan to interview at any colleges this summer. Juniors only.

June

6--SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests offered.

--Mail off for college applications, brochures, and financial aid information if not offered via the Web. Juniors only.

--Make college visitations. This is mainly a junior activity but it would not hurt for sophomores to look at some campuses if in the North America during July and August. Take your **HIS College Handbook** and prepare by reading the section on college visitations.

COLLEGE PLACEMENT CALENDAR FOR SENIORS

The following are deadlines for your actions. Look and plan ahead to meet them

September

14--Recommendation Request forms given to teachers.

26--Give written recommendation requests to two teachers and the principal. Final list of colleges turned in.

--If you have not already mailed/downloaded and received all of your college applications and brochures, send off for them **immediately**. Be sure to request the correct application form. When you receive applications, make sure that you receive the correct one. **U.S. citizens should request regular applications for U.S. citizens. Non-U.S. students should receive applications clearly marked for international students.**

--Individual meetings with your advisor to discuss your applications and to review summer college visits.

--Register to take the SAT Reasoning Test and/or SAT Subject Tests. Don't forget to list on the application form the schools to which you want your scores sent. Check the College Board Web site for deadlines for international test takers.

--Make sure by the end of September that you set up your files for each college to which you are applying. Keep all of your college mail including applications in these regular and computer folders.

--Decide if you plan to apply **Early Decision** or **Early Action**. If you choose either plan, begin immediate processing of the application.

--Request copies of the **Transcript Request** form from Ms. Chen. Fill one out for each application.

--Make your **college application calendar** with deadlines for testing registrations, test dates & college application deadlines, and scholarship application deadlines.

--Arrange to work with English teacher on college essays.

--Submit to Ms. Chen your **Secondary School Reports** as they come in from all colleges that you are targeting for Early Decision and Early Action applications.

--Take the TOEFL again if you need to.

--Start making contact with admission officers at the schools you will be applying to. Have questions prepared that cannot be answered by looking at college Web sites or by looking in college guidebooks. Potentially set up Skype interviews. You are not only learning more about prospective schools but are also showing the admissions staffs that you are a go getter.

--Start making contact with students at your prospective colleges. Use social networking sites to find potential contacts. Facebook and the recently launched Unigo site are good places to learn more about colleges from the student perspective.

October

4--SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests offered.

28--Parent recommendation form is due to Mr. Loken

--Give completed applications for **Early Decision** or **Early Action** to Ms. Chen at least two weeks before their deadlines. All Early Decision or Early Action applications, application fees and bank statements (non-U.S. passport holders only) must be turned into Ms. Chen in time for her to meet the application deadlines. Don't forget that each application is to be placed in a separate envelope and labeled with the name of the specific college to which it will be sent. You will also need to pay the mailing fees by this date. The college application fee must be paid with either checks cashable at an American bank or a credit card account number. Some schools such as the California State Universities have early regular application dates sometimes as early as the end of November. Check the deadlines and put them on your calendar!

--Continue to submit **Secondary School Reports** and **Transcript Requests** to Ms. Chen as they come in.

--Make sure you send SAT and TOEFL score report forms to your colleges. Your target schools must receive official scores from the ETS testing agency.

--If you are a non-U.S. citizen, you must demonstrate to your college that your family can pay the tuition. You must go to your bank and obtain a bank statement and a letter from the manager to certify that you have sufficient funds to pay tuition for one year. You must give this bank statement and the letter to the office to include with your application. You will receive the Form I-20 visa application with directions to apply for a student visa to enter the U.S. and attend college once you have been accepted by a college.

November

10--Transcript requests and Secondary School Reports due to Ms. Chen.

19--All applications, application fees and any other needed documents for January application deadlines to be turned into Ms. Chen by this date. Don't forget that each application is to be placed in a separate envelope and labeled with the name of the specific college to which it will be sent. You will also need to pay the mailing fees by this date. The college application fee must be paid with either checks cashable at an American bank or a credit card account number.

December

6--SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests offered.

--Complete your FAFSA (Free Application For Student Aid for **U.S. citizens**) application online at www.fafsa.ed.gov/.

--Turn in all Mid-year Report Transcript Request forms to Ms. Chen. **Failure to do this will prevent schools from making a decision on your application.**

January

--Ms. Chen will mail copies of your mid-year transcript to your target colleges for which you gave us forms. You must give her the form or your school will not receive your mid-year grades.

--U.S. citizens should make sure they complete their FAFSA application online.

--**Decision-Making Workshop** for seniors.

February - March

Notify Ms. Chen and your advisors as you receive replies from colleges We need to record both acceptances and rejections.

April

--Students should receive all notifications of admission and financial aid awards by this time. You will need to notify the school of your choice and the ones you turn down of your decision in the next two weeks. **Let your advisors know your decision when it is made.**

--All thank you notes given to those who wrote you recommendations.

June

--Graduation (you did it!) Leave summer and college addresses with main office. Request your final transcript be sent to your college to let them know that you kept your grades up and did graduate. Begin the next process of packing and getting yourself on the road to your college.

**CRITERIA FOR COLLEGE SELECTION
AND
DIFFERENTIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

College application requires careful planning, organization, and thought. Keep the following in mind when looking at colleges. You are searching for colleges that make the best fit for **you**. Notice that we say colleges with the knowledge that there are multiple colleges and universities which will make terrific fits for you. We recommend that you apply to **eight to ten** colleges and universities. It is important to divide your application list of schools into 3 categories:

- 1) Strong Reach Schools- the one's that are maybe a little too selective for your qualifications.
- 2) The Realistic Schools- these are the ones whose admissions qualifications are similar to your qualifications.
- 3) A Safety School- you will probably only choose one or two to which you are sure to be accepted. This will be your back-up school for the whole process.

Below, find a list of several characteristics that colleges can have.

Ways to Differentiate Colleges and Universities

1. Philosophy of the College/University
 - objectives
 - who controls- state, trustees, church, etc.
 - traditional, conservative, liberal, progressive
 - amount of student involvement in the school
2. Type of School
 - Liberal Arts College (often without graduate schools)
 - University (with graduate schools)
 - Public vs Private
 - Coed vs single sex
 - Technical Institution (often two year degree)
 - Junior College (two year degree)
3. Size
4. Geographical Location
 - Urban, Suburban or Rural
5. Feel of Campus
 - Traditional college vs commuter school
6. Curriculum offered

7. Cost

- financial assistance available
- scholarship programs
- living, tuition, books, etc. expenses

8. Extracurricular Activities

- intercollegiate sports
- lecture series
- intramural sports
- music/art/video & TV stations/school magazine and newspapers
- clubs/Greek system/CO- OP's
- work opportunities

9. Admissions

- average SAT, Class Rank, GPA, and other requirements
- interview requirement
- types of admissions offered
- deadlines

10. Overall Selectivity, Reputation, & Academic Excellence

- student body profile
- competitive level of classroom expectations

11. Geographical Make-Up of Students

- regions represented in North America
- nations represented

12. Academic Life

- amount of academic pressure
- conformity vs. individuality
- class size: lecture vs small group seminars
- professors or teaching assistants teaching

13. Social Life

- centered around "Greek" life (of fraternities and sororities)
- centered around sporting events
- town or city life

WWW RESOURCES

We have several guidebooks for college, specific pamphlets for colleges and a staff of educators who have a variety of undergraduate college experiences. Seek out these resources and don't rely on word of mouth. Get the facts!

The following are just a few of the many Web sites which offer information pertaining to colleges and universities in North America and around the world. There is no descriptive listing of the sites because each student should do his/her best to look at as many of these sites as possible. Almost every college and university has its own Web site which you can find listed in our college guidebooks in the office. Unless otherwise indicated, all of the below listed address are "www" addresses. For example, the complete address for "yahoo.com" is www.yahoo.com.

- Unigo.com
- Collegeboard.org
- Collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp
- Collegetoolkit.com/
- Careersandcolleges.com
- Collegeview.com/index.jsp
- Princetonreview.com/default.aspx?uidbadge=
- Petersons.com/
- Usnews.com/sections/education/index.html
- Xap.com/
- Finaid.org
- Collegeapps.about.com/
- Collegeapps.about.com/od/choosingacollege/a/CollegeProfiles.htm
- Commonapp.org/CommonApp/default.aspx
- Mit.edu/people/cdemello/univ.html
- Fafsa.ed.gov/ for U.S. citizens
- [//dir.yahoo.com/Education/Higher_Education/Colleges_and_Universities/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Higher_Education/Colleges_and_Universities/)
- [//dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/College_and_University/Newspapers/By_Region](http://dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/College_and_University/Newspapers/By_Region)

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS NOT HOLDING U.S. PASSPORTS

It is important to know that a foreign student applying to colleges in the United States will follow almost the exact procedures as the students holding U.S. passports. The main differences come in the application request where your child will notify the prospective colleges of his/her foreign national status, and once your child is accepted to college.

Financial aid to U.S. colleges and universities is offered mainly to U.S. citizens. The main avenue for financial assistance for foreign students is academic scholarships for schools wanting to attract top international students. Our U.S. citizen students will go online to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** (FAFSA) in December. It is important for families to research possible financial aid from their home countries. Some nations provide funding for overseas educational opportunities to their citizens.

Another difference in the application process for your child will be the certification of your finances. Each college application our non-U.S. citizen students receive will include a **certification of finances** form to help the college determine your ability to finance their tuition. This is a prerequisite established by the U.S. Federal Government.

Once accepted to an American college, your child will need to have the **F-1 visa**. Your university will send you an **I-20** form to be completed and filed at the AIT in Taipei to receive your child's F-1 visa. This visa is for foreign students who will be attending U.S. colleges. You need to review the information at the AIT site (<http://ait.org.tw/en/>) to be prepared for your visit and interview.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

Questionnaire & Activity Sheet

Attention Juniors:

It is time to spend some time considering who you are. What makes you special? What are some of your attributes that many might not see? It is time for you to **self-evaluate** in order to provide in-depth information that your advisors can use to help you find the schools that best fit your needs. Secondly, many colleges have an activity type of form in their applications. Your **careful** and **thoughtful** responses will also be an important factor in further self-understanding and helping to determine where you are going in the future. Remember, you are helping yourself. We are providing an outline of a sample Activity Form that you may choose to follow. In the end, we want you to type up an activity form that clearly and concisely provides a snapshot of how you spent grades 9 through 11 including time spent away from school. Reviewing your answers to these questions can be helpful as preparation for your college interviews.

The following are some ideas to consider:

- Take the time to think about **who you are** and **what you believe in**.
- Don't limit your response to what has happened at school. Use experiences from all parts of your life. Be honest. Be specific.
- Remember that the questions of the questionnaire are asked to help you and your advisors know you better. However, if you do not feel comfortable answering some of the questions, please bring this to the attention to your advisors.
- Please word process your answers to the questions. Be organized in your writing.
- Mark any information that you wish to be kept confidential.
- Don't forget to put a time length on your entries (as in hours per week or years.)
- Throughout the first half of your senior year, be sure to update your activity sheet and this questionnaire when you receive additional awards or have other pertinent information useful to your advisors.

JUNIOR QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

(You will receive a copy of these questions (with spaces provided for answers) to be completed during one of your advisory sessions. The questions are provided here to give your parents more insight as to the **Self Discovery and College Placement Guidance** program.)

1. What aspects of your high school years have you enjoyed the most? Why?
2. Which courses have given you the most trouble and why?
3. Who is/has been your favorite teacher? What made him/her special to you?
4. If you could study anything at all on your own, what would it be?
5. What are your main academic/intellectual interests? Please give details.
6. List the books you have read in the last twelve months (not assigned through school). Please describe some new ideas, which you either came upon or reached on your own from reading one of these books.
7. How much do you like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas? Please describe a recent topic of debate or interest.
8. What activities do you most enjoy in or out of school? What do these activities offer you?
9. What experience in the past few years has "turned you on" academically and intellectually?
10. Do you feel that you have worked up to your potential in high school? ____ If not, what has prevented you from reaching or being where you wanted to be? What is an accurate description of the quality of your work?
11. Have there been any outside circumstances that have kept you from doing your best work? Please explain the reasons for any low points in your work.
12. Given a whole day with nothing you had to do, what would you do?
13. Describe the best summer or vacation you ever spent.
14. How would you describe your family and your relationship to it? Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence, or contribution? Please explain.
15. What has been the worst thing that has ever happened to you? How did you cope with the situation? How did you learn from it?
16. Both in and outside of school, what viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
17. What world problems or issues bother you the most? Why?
18. What person (living or dead, famous or not) do you admire the most?
19. What do you consider your strengths?
20. What do you consider your weaknesses?
21. How might your best friend describe you?
22. How might your worst critic describe you?
23. Who is the student you most admire in school? Why?
24. What kind of person would you like to become? What are some of your personal goals?
25. What events or experiences have shaped your growth and development?
26. How do you learn best?
27. Where have you found yourself in a leadership position? Please explain.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY SHEET

(a condensed version)

Susan Chan
42 Chung Shan Road
Hsinchu City, Taiwan
chan.his@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES, AWARDS, HONORS, AND OFFICES

Grade 9:

- Student Gov't Representative: chaired committee to improve dining hall
- Earned black belt in karate
- Member of church choir
- Summer music camp in Hong Kong (2 weeks)
- 40 hours community involvement

Grade 10:

- Student Gov't Vice-president: developed new committee system for student gov't
- Worked at Camp Seagull as assistant counselor (5 weeks)
- Attended William & Mary Summer Institute to study writing (3 weeks)
- 50 hours community involvement

Grade 11:

- Awarded English Department award for most original essay
- Varsity Volleyball Team: awarded MVP
- Internship with HTC designing new phones
- 50 hours community involvement
- Traveled to China with family. (3 weeks)

Personal Statement: *The words that best describe me and my beliefs and interests are...*

RESUME

Your resume is to provide the Director of Admissions with information about you to save interview time and to make it easy for the office to file important data about you. It is also business-like and impressive to present one. Listed below are suggestions of areas that should be covered; you may add your own ideas. You can use much of the data you have compiled for your Activity Sheet within your resume. It should be well organized and word processed. You may want to use one of the models provided in Microsoft's Word software program. Make several copies.

1. Name (complete, social security number, birthday)
2. Contact Information (Address, Phone, Fax, E- Portfolio, E-mail)
3. Name of high school, grade level.
4. Academic Interests (e.g., reading, computer work, IB classes)
5. Non-academic Interests (e.g., reading, football, opera singing, bird watching)
6. Academic Honors and Awards (e.g., Honor Roll grade 10, Top history student grade 11)
7. Non-academic offices, clubs (list in order of priority to you) (e.g., President Recycling Club, Captain Soccer team)
8. Volunteer and community experience (include specific tasks accomplished, number of days, hours)
9. Career Plans, if any (don't be afraid to be vague or not list any)

PARENT RECOMMENDATION QUESTIONNAIRE AND FORM

(Our juniors will bring a copy of this form home to be completed by their parents.)

Dear Parents:

Many of our students who will be applying to North American colleges and universities will need an official school recommendation. To enable me to write one for your son or daughter, we would greatly appreciate your completing this form and returning it to my office by **October 24th**.

No one knows the student as well as his or her own parents. So often the student does not see his or her special qualities, abilities, and actions which colleges and universities are so interested in hearing about. Your completing this questionnaire will enable me to apply your insight as to the strengths, weaknesses, and background which really will complete the picture of who your son or daughter is.

Please try to answer as many of the following questions as possible on a separate sheet of paper. I appreciate your being as specific and detailed as possible in your responses. Please use additional sheets of paper if needed. Your responses are confidential; we will be the only person reading them. Thank you very much for this invaluable help!

Sincerely,

Brent Loken

1. What experience(s) in the past few years has sparked your child's intellectual interest?
2. To what extent do you feel your child has taken advantage of learning opportunities inside and outside of school?
3. In what specific ways do you see your child using his/her intellectual abilities outside of the classroom?
4. What three adjectives first come to mind when thinking of your child? Please explain each one with specific examples.
5. What events and/or people have really shaped the growth of your child? Please explain.
6. What character and personality traits do you consider most interesting and important in your child? If possible, please describe the specific ways that these traits manifest themselves, i.e., in leadership positions held, clubs joined, etc.
7. What are you looking for as you make plans for your child's higher education? What type of college/university do you see as ideal for your child?
8. How do you think attending an international school has affected your child?
9. What are your child's greatest strengths?
10. Even though we both know your child is as near to perfect as is possible, it's important for us to balance the picture by noting the weaknesses s/he possesses. What are your child's weaknesses—or areas in which you might like to see further growth?

Please give your educational background: college(s)/ universities attended, degree(s), etc., and colleges/universities of your other children, if they have attended.

Mother:

Father:

Siblings:

PARENT RECOMMENDATION: (optional)

Finally, if you wish, please write your own recommendation for your child in which you give **specific** characterizations and examples that portray him or her. It is important not only to explain the strengths but also the weakness of your child. Try to include what you think college will offer your child in the area of personal growth.

COLLEGE VISITATION

It is important to visit as many colleges on your list as possible during your summers. Despite the fact that these visits take time and effort on your part (and on the part of your parents), we think that you will find them to be exceptionally helpful and, hopefully, fun as well.

Preparation for Visit: You should write the admissions office for an appointment at least 2 months in advance, if possible. Setting up an appointment is absolutely essential if you are intending to do anything more than have a tour of the campus. Even if a tour is all you would like at a given institution, it would be polite, and helpful to the admissions office to know of your visit ahead of time. If you have a special interest in meeting with a coach or with a financial officer, be sure to mention this to the person who is scheduling your visit to the college.

Prepare your **resume/activity sheet** and request a copy of your **transcript** from the office (note that the transcript will not be ready until a week after the end of school. If you have to leave before then, request a transcript up through the first semester. You can always carry copies of your second semester report card with you.)

Read the catalogue and brochure before arriving on campus; be aware not only of obvious facts about the college, but also about any special programs which make it different from other institutions you may be visiting. Do these differences make it particularly attractive to you? Why? Prepare the questions that you will want answered during your interview and tour. (See sections that follow.)

Dress appropriately for the tour and especially well for the interview.

Arrival for tour: Arrive in plenty of time for the schedule you have set up for the day. (Allow yourself time to get lost, time to park, and if you are running late, be sure to call the admissions office to let them know.)

A summer college visit will include some combination of the following: a group tour, an information session, and an interview. Your tour guide will probably be a student. Understand that your guide must really like the school to give of his or her time to it. Take this possible bias into consideration. This will be a good time to ask questions about student lifestyle and social life. A few possible questions for the tour guide are as follows:

- 1) What are the college's biggest strengths and weaknesses?
- 2) How much do students talk about current issues? What are the biggest current events issues being discussed on campus?
- 3) What has been the current discussion on minority rights?
- 4) Has there been any recent campus clashes concerning these rights?
- 5) How big are the classes for freshmen?

- 6) Who actually does the teaching i.e., graduate students or professors? Ask your guide to describe what a couple of his/her classes would like if being observed.
- 7) What happens on a usual weekend?
- 8) What is the dating atmosphere like?
- 9) How important is the local town, city, or nearby area for recreational time (sporting events, plays, student hangouts, etc.)?

The college visit is the best way to get the information you want about a given institution. As with all things in life, the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. Prepare yourself well before visiting a college. Make sure to set aside time for yourself to wander around campus. Take a look at bulletin boards and copies of the school paper to understand more about campus issues.

What is the Interview and How Important is it? If the college offers the opportunity for you to interview, you should certainly take advantage of it. A college interview means many things to many different colleges. Depending upon whether the director of admissions, a faculty member, or a student intern interviews you, your experience will be quite different. Some interviews are straightforward question-and-answer sessions, others are conversations that may go in a variety of directions, or you may just have a chance to talk about yourself. The interview may be considered an important part of the college admissions process or, more often, it may simply be an opportunity to exchange information. In most cases, your interview will neither make or break you for admission to that institution.

Proper preparation for the interview first involves what questions you want to ask the interviewer about his/her college. The following are some that you may wish to consider:

- 1) What are the major current issues on campus? How concerned are students about social and political issues in general?
- 2) Do the students have a part in the decision-making on the curriculum or faculty hiring?
- 3) What are largest/most popular departments? (Do not ask what the best department is--that is an unanswerable question.)
- 4) What do the majority of graduates do after college? Do they go straight into the work force or go on for more schooling?
- 5) Would the college's curriculum be described as traditional or innovative?
- 6) What are the prospects for students to embark upon independent study on individual majors?
- 7) How accessible are faculty members outside the classroom?
- 8) What is the percentage of women on the faculty? Minorities? Has it changed much in the last five-to-ten years?
- 9) How active is the student government?
- 10) What percentage of your students are international? What activities or organizations are there on campus for these students? How well integrated are they?
- 11) What are your overseas programs like?
- 12) Which specific CO-OP, internships programs, etc. is the school most proud of?

13) What do students like or dislike most about the college?

You can certainly think of other questions, which you would like to ask. Remember, be creative with your questions, but never ask a question for which you have no interest in the answer. **And remember to ask questions that cannot be answered from handbooks and brochures!** It is perfectly all right to take a list of questions in with you, along with a notepad and pen so that you can jot down notes. Avoid asking the questions which would be least impressive to ask, such as "How many students do you have?" or "How many books do you have in your library?"

The other part of the preparation for the interview is, of course, the part that readies you to answer the interviewer's questions. While it is impossible to know exactly what a given interviewer might ask you on a given day, there are certain kinds of questions which crop up regularly in college interviews: 1) What is your greatest accomplishment? What is your greatest strength as a student? Your greatest weakness? 2) Do you read a lot? What is the last book you read outside of class assignments? 3) Do you have any contemporary heroes? Historical heroes? Why are these people heroes to you? What is a hero? 4) How would you describe yourself as a person? How would your best friend describe you? 5) What do you feel sets you apart from your classmates? 6) If you did not go to college right after graduation, what would you most like to do for a year? 7) Are you planning to major in some specific area at this point? Are you interested in a particular career? Why? 8) How have you spent your last two summers? 9) What effect has your overseas living experience had upon you? To prepare for this interview, it will be helpful for you to review the answers you gave for the Student Self-Evaluation Explanation prepared during our workshops together and summarized earlier in this handbook.

Arrival for Interview: If they do not have any special questions of their own, leave your parents at the coffee shop while you go to the admissions office. Introduce yourself to the secretary and relax. **Do not forget to give a copy of your resume and transcript to the secretary to be given to your interviewer.** It might be wise now to ask for the spelling of the interviewer's name. Write it down. Remember to greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and to repeat his or her name when they greet you, an old trick for remembering names. And make sure that you get the lion's share of the interviewer's time. Your parents are certainly welcome to join you for a few minutes and have the right to have their questions answered, but the dominant impression you want to leave with the interviewer is of you.

Conducting the Interview: The interview is a 50/50 proposition. Don't be afraid to talk about yourself and make sure you get all of your questions answered. It is important that you make it easy on your interviewer by being an attentive listener and a lively conversationalist. Consider which questions are appropriate for your interviewer and which are for your student tour guide. You probably want to save the more "social" questions for the student guide, while focusing on more academic, serious matters in your admissions interview. Being well prepared for the interview not only increases your chances of sounding impressive, but it also builds your confidence and makes you less nervous. You should have no problem at all if you know a lot

about the college and, even more important, a lot about yourself and your reasons for wanting to attend **that** college.

The bottom line in all of this is that you be open, honest, and thoughtful in your responses to your interviewer's questions. It is perfectly all right to say, "I don't know," but it is not all right to give the interviewer the impression that you have never thought about important and obvious matters, which he/she may raise with you. For example, you may well not know what major you wish to pursue in college, but it is much better to say, in response to that question, "I'm not sure yet. There are so many exciting things that I have yet to explore" rather than "Gosh, I've never really thought about it."

The interview should be helpful for you, in terms of getting to know more about a given institution, what it has to offer, ways in which it might be the right place for you. But you are also trying to make a positive impression on the person representing that institution. The balance between these two goals is indeed possible and well within your abilities if you work at it.

After your college visit/interview, be sure to write a thank you note to your interviewer and thank him/her for his/her time and interest. (Did you get her name? Are you spelling it correctly?) You may even wish to include questions you forgot to ask at the time. Again, any way you have to create a positive impression of yourself will be helpful to you later on in the admissions process. Likewise, if a student gave you a tour of the campus, send him/her a quick note.

Last of all, be sure to take good notes right after your visit to a college. You will certainly forget things you may wish to remember if you wait until days later to record your impressions. It may be helpful to develop some sort of checklist of those facilities/issues/programs most important to you before setting out on your visits. It is a good idea to sit down with your parents afterwards to talk about your impressions.

What To Look For When Visiting A College Campus

(Take notes before, during, and after college visits.)

1. setting--proximity to other colleges, attractive cultural opportunities
2. size of school
3. size of freshmen class
4. co-ed, ratio of women to men
5. religious or nonsectarian

6. urban or rural

7. diversity

8. dormitories

- location in relation to classes, to dining rooms, are meals served in the dorms, co-ed dorms, if so, how are they organized (co-ed by floor, by suite, by room)
- special distinctions (language dorms, honors dorms, athletic dorms)
- where do freshmen live?, what type of residential advisor system?
- are dorms available for all interested students all four years?
- number of students per room: doubles, triplets, or suites?

9. fraternities/sororities/eating clubs

- do they exist?
- what effect on campus life?
- what pressure is there to join? What percentage of students belong?
- are they co-ed?
- is the social life of the school organized around the Greek system

10. dining rooms

- what variety of food plans?
- is there a cooperative house--where students do their own cooking?
- where are food service locations?

11. co-curricular facilities

- theaters, types, student directors and productions
- type and number of presentations
- other types of entertainment, films, music and dance and concerts, museums
- community involvement programs
- student center (student union)
- clubs: debate, student government, yearbook, newspaper

12. athletic facilities

- equal for men and women?
- what's available-- gymnasium use, weight room, etc.?
- importance to campus life
- opportunities for the non-athletic but enthusiastic student? (Intramural sports, outdoor activity groups)

13. laboratories

- language
- writing lab
- science--number, nature of lab set-ups, availability to undergrads

14. libraries
 - variety of around campus
 - hours of operation
 - availability of computers and other resources
 - other study areas available
15. special facilities unique to the college--art studios, dance studios, observatory
16. religious organizations--chapel, synagogue, group meetings
17. stores, laundries, cafes, etc.
18. student health center and facilities
 - good hospital/clinic facilities
 - strong counseling service, career placement center
 - medical and dental plans for students

The Academic Program

1. calendar
 - basic organization (semester, trimester)
 - summer program
 - January /winter terms/ interim programs taking place between official terms
 - number of terms/courses to graduate
2. alternative study programs
 - exchanges with other schools
 - internships
 - foreign study programs
 - pass-fail option classes
3. academic policies (usually found in the catalogue)
 - number of courses to graduate
 - honors program
 - when required to declare a major
 - distribution requirements
 - nature of interdisciplinary options
 - undergraduate concentrations (architecture, 6-year medical program, engineering, etc.)
 - class attendance required

4. academic issues

- range in the size of classes (not average & not student/faculty ratios as these numbers can be misleading)
- seminars available, tutorials available
- certain distinguished departments
- if large introductory courses, how is teaching broken down, lectures in small groups, do graduate assistants do the teaching, who does the grading?
- how many faculty, what percentage with Ph.D.s

5. attrition rate: during freshmen year? by senior year?

6. percentage of students going on to graduate study

- what type of placement in past
- any career counseling service available

7. scholarship aid available, from school or government, loans, student work/study

8. admissions

- how selective
- what difference in competition in admission to specific programs or majors
- what are admissions criteria: SAT, ACT, Achievements, course difficulty and grades?

9. academic advisors for students to consult throughout their years of study

Other Matters

1. To Do's

- check out the bulletin boards to get a feel for activities and campus issues
- look at student newspapers and recent yearbooks
- try to eat a meal there
- talk to many students
- try to see whether a strong student government exists

2. campus atmosphere

- intellectual
- nonconformist
- socially concerned
- traditional
- Greek oriented (heavily influenced by activities of fraternities and sororities)
- Athletic/jock oriented
- conservative

3. regulations for student behavior beyond dorm life, honor code

STUDENT PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Student Responsibilities and Procedures: the following is an overview of the student's responsibilities and timeline for completing the applications process. Please see the specific sections of the **HIS College Handbook** which provide more in-depth detail. It is HIS's policy to send applications and all supporting documents from our office to the intended colleges. There are several reasons for this. The first is that colleges and universities prefer to receive all parts of a candidate's application in one package. This way, there is less chance that one of the documents that make up the application will get misplaced by the target school's admissions office. The second reason is that it is easier to deal with any possible problems that may arise because all of the materials will be originating from one place. The third reason is that transcripts can only be considered official if they come directly from HIS. Thus, if we have to mail them anyway, it only makes sense to mail the entire application packet all together. **HIS will keep copies of all teacher and counselor recommendations, transcripts, and secondary school reports. But it is the student's full responsibility to keep copies of everything else!**

1. Participate in the **Self Discovery and College Placement** program. Complete all the materials that will help you and your advisors know you (yourself) better.
2. Decide which college entrance examinations you will need to take during the 11th grade.
3. Develop your list of 8 to 10 schools that you plan to apply to. In June of the 11th grade year, download applications and any other materials you need to apply to these schools. Re-check step 2 above to make you are on track with your entrance tests.
4. Before the end of the 11th grade year speak with and request recommendations from two of your teachers. You will follow up your requests in September with the **Recommendation Request Form** provided in the office.
5. Specifically develop your resume to share with the admissions staffs you visit with during the summer.
6. Request from Ms. Chen copies of your transcript to take with you for your college visitations.
7. Visit as many of the schools as possible between your 11th and 12th grade years.
8. Once back to Taiwan in August, begin working on applications and essays.
9. Work closely with your parents, teachers, and advisor to complete work and meet deadlines.
10. Register and take for a second time the college entrance examinations that you need to take.

11. Type your list of target schools along with their respective application deadlines. Give this list to Ms. Chen.
12. Turn in to Ms. Chen by the listed deadlines your **Secondary school/Counselor reports** and transcript requests. You must type the personal information such as name and home address on each Secondary school report before you give it to Ms. Chen.
13. Make copies of the application materials that **you** (not your parents) have completed.
14. Turn in to Ms. Chen by the listed deadlines your completed applications with the application payment enclosed and any other requested information. Each application must be placed in an envelope with the name and address of the college and your name on the outside. A school profile that describes our courses and programs will be included in with each application packet. Make copies of your application materials. Remember to clearly tell Ms. Chen when each application is ready to be mailed.
15. Turn in to Ms. Chen your mid-year report forms sent by the universities. You must type the personal information such as name and home address on each mid-year report before you give it to her. Most schools will not review your application until they receive your first semester grades.

HIS Office and Advisor Responsibilities: Ms. Chen and your advisor will be working with you individually as well as collectively to guide you through the process of applying to university. The following are the logistical and educational services we provide.

1. The **HIS College Handbook** and the **Self Discovery and College Placement** program are structured to offer you the means to better understand yourself as well as the colleges which will best meet your needs. We also provide the concrete procedures to complete and deliver by courier your college applications.
2. Your advisor will explain the college entrance examination registration information. These tests are required if you plan to apply to schools in North America.
3. HIS will use either a courier service or regular mail to mail your completed applications packets. You will need to decide which mail service as there is a difference in what you will be charged for mailing fees. See Ms. Chen for the fee structure. We will keep copies of all teacher and counselor recommendations, transcripts and secondary school reports.

It should be evident by comparing your responsibilities to those of the HIS office staff and advisors that the responsibility for being accepted to colleges is clearly in your hands. From the amount of work you put into your courses starting in Institute II to how you spent your summers to how you stretched yourself to reach the HIS student learning outcomes, it is you, **the student**, who gets him/herself into college!

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

The following are the five major types of college entrance exams a student should be aware of. Some but not all are required for applying to most schools. To complete testing requirements,

- be aware of the requirements of the schools to which you wish to apply;
- register by the deadline for each exam;
- report your scores by carefully following directions.

1. **PSAT/NMSQT-** Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Qualifying Test (College Board Test Program)

This test is given in **October to all interested HIS sophomores and juniors**. The PSAT is divided into five sections (two verbal, two math and one writing) and is useful as an indicator of what the SAT I scores will be. The score earned during October of the junior year is the basis for selection for some merit scholarships. The score may also grab the attention of certain colleges that will then send you "recruitment" mailings such as their college brochure. The top 1% of juniors (who are U.S. citizens) taking the test in each state and internationally are selected as National Merit Semifinalists. The college advisor and student can use the PSAT score to help in determining the student's list of target schools.

2. **SAT Reasoning Test-** (College Board Test Program)

This is approximately 4 hour exam of three sections measures critical reading and mathematical reasoning ability as well as writing skill. The SAT Reasoning Test scoring range for each of the three tests ranges between 200 (lowest) and 800 (highest) with the composite being the total of the three scores. The SAT Reasoning Test should be taken in the **last months of the junior year and at the beginning of the senior year**.

3. **SAT Subject Test** (College Board Test Program)

These are one-hour tests that measure knowledge and skills in specific subject areas. Students may take up to three SAT Subject tests on one date. They are usually offered on the same dates as the SAT Reasoning Test throughout the year, but you may not take BOTH tests on the same test date. Most very selective colleges and universities require three SAT Subject Tests, usually Literature, Math Level I or II; and an additional subject. Check the College Board Web site for the latest listing of subject areas being offered. You will need to review the list of schools to which you are applying to see if they require SAT Subject Tests and which specific ones they want you to take. **You usually take the SAT Subject Test in late spring of the junior year.**

4. ACT- American College Testing Program (ACT Test Program)

The ACT consists of four tests in academic areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science. There is an optional writing test that works to measure the ability to plan and write an essay. There are four separate scores plus a composite score which is an average score of the tests. For all four individual tests and the composite score, the scoring range is 1 (lowest) to 36 (highest). The ACT is commonly required by public colleges and some private colleges in the Midwest, West, and South of the United States. **See your college advisor for more information on how to sign up for the ACT if you need to take it.**

5. TOEFL/TWE- Test of English as a Foreign Language

The purpose of the TOEFL test is to evaluate the English proficiency of students whose native language is not English. The computer/Web-based test measures the test taker's ability to understand North American English. It is divided into four parts: Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. Students are to go to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Web site to find a location in Hsinchu and register for the test. **For many students, the TOEFL should be taken at the end of the junior year and secondly in the beginning of the senior year if one wishes to try to improve one's score. For most of our students, only one sitting of the TOEFL is needed. Students who are very strong in their English can take the TOEFL earlier in the junior year to spread out some of the college entrance examinations.**

TEST PREPARATION

Many parents and students have anxiety about taking college entrance examinations. The big question usually is, "What can we do to prepare best for it?" If the exams are instruments used to measure one's ability in secondary school subjects and their usage, then our students are being best prepared by making the most of their class and after-school learning time. It goes without saying that a student who has been an avid reader in English for much of his/her life is usually one with a strong vocabulary and understanding of the written word in English. With the majority of our students learning English as a second or third language, we definitely need to understand that their scores on the verbal and written portions of college entrance tests will reflect this. Hopefully, our students have made the most of their time in and out of school in their study of English. Yet, if they wish to prepare further, students can find help in the following:

- There are SAT verbal and mathematical review books available at bookstores and through the mail. The College Board offers a wide array of choices including guides for the different SAT II subject area examinations. There are also Web sites that offer SAT prep materials. Taking practice tests is proven to help familiarize a student with the test format, which is helpful in reducing test anxiety and promoting better performance.
- There are several computer preparation programs on CD-ROM and on the Web.
- There are also several study materials offered for the TOEFL.
- Students can take classes offered by private agencies to prepare for college placement examinations.

What to take with you to the test:

For the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests or the ACT, remember your admissions ticket, passport for identification, and two #2 pencils. Check to see if you can bring an approved calculator.

For the TOEFL, you must take proper identification documents to the testing center. For further information concerning the new computer/Web-based TOEFL, you should go to the TOEFL section of the Educational Testing Services (ETS) Web site.

REGISTERING FOR SATs, ACTs, AND TOEFL

Students must register to take the college entrance tests by registering online. Each test provider offers a great deal of information on their sites. Keep the following in mind as you plan.

1. Review the schedule of test dates and mark your calendar.
2. Do not miss the registration deadlines.
3. Check each of your target colleges to be certain you fulfill its requirement to take the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests, TOEFL, and/or the ACT.
4. Be aware that some colleges require three different SAT Subject Tests and some require **specific** subject tests. Check each the requirements for each of your colleges.
5. You cannot take the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Test on the same date.
6. When registering for any of these tests, be sure to fill out the Student Descriptive Questionnaire and register for the College Board's Student Search Service. As a result, you will receive information from a variety of colleges and scholarship programs.
7. It is the student's responsibility to have results of standardized tests sent to the colleges to which you are applying. See the next section.

REPORTING TEST SCORES TO YOUR TARGET COLLEGES

In order for your target schools to receive an official report of your scores on the standardized tests, the student must give instructions to the testing service to **report** his or her scores. You can accomplish this in the following manner:

1. First, for SATs, use the original online test registration form. On it you will be able to list four schools to which the testing service will send a report of your scores for free. You must pay a fee for additional score report requests. The process is somewhat similar for the TOEFL.
2. You can use your College Board online account to send score reports to additional colleges at any time.

DECISION PLANS

The date your application is due and the date of your notification of acceptance or rejection depends upon the "decision plan" for your application. Students wishing to get the process over with, and who have a clear favorite college can apply Early Decision. Most students, however, will apply for Regular Decision. The following information will help you better understand the different plans.

1. **Early Decision.** Early Decision Requirements vary from college to college. Check the catalogue of your chosen college for exact requirements.

The general requirements for Early Decision are as follows:

- a. You must decide that the chosen school is the one you want to attend next year. If you are wavering between two or three, forget Early Decision!
- b. You must agree to attend the chosen school if that school accepts you. This is a total commitment on your part.
- c. For some schools, you must agree not to apply to any other schools until you hear from the one you have chosen for Early Decision. As regards the November deadline to have in all of your applications to HIS's office, you are an exception! You will need to apply to other schools only if you receive a negative response from your Early Decision school. You must hold other applications until you hear from Early Decision school.
- d. You will need to complete in the junior year, all college tests required by your college.
- e. Your application will need to be submitted very early in the senior year—see the application for the exact date.

If your chosen school does not accept you, you may have your application transferred to the regular admissions pool. There are some schools that will not re-examine a rejected early decision candidate afterwards with the regular pool of candidates.

Early Decision is only for those who know they want to attend one certain school above all others!

2. **Early Action.** Some colleges will begin accepting applications in early fall to provide early action on them. They will give early notification of acceptance or rejection if an application is submitted by a specific date. Read all information closely as many schools have their own procedures for this process.

3. **Rolling Admissions.** Schools having rolling admission accept applicants and offer admission on a regular, on-going basis. Usually a decision is rendered within three to four weeks of receipt of all parts of the application.

4. **Regular Decision.** Applicants are notified of the college's decision by a specific date (April 1 or April 15 usually).

RECOMMENDATION REQUEST PROCEDURES

(Including procedure for asking teachers to write recommendations)

An official recommendation from HIS will be written by the principal for each senior applying to schools in North America.

In addition, you may wish (or may be required) to submit two or more other recommendations. Think through who you want to write the letter. It doesn't have to be the teacher for the course in which you have an A. It may be the teacher for the course in which you have the C especially when that teacher can explain your lower grade in a positive context. Recommendations should come from the following sources:

- A teacher who can write about your particular ability and personal qualities in a specific academic subject.
- A teacher, advisor, coach, club sponsor, etc., who can write about your qualities and abilities as observed in a specific activity.
- An outside adult who has worked with you or supervised you in an activity (e.g., sponsor of Church Youth Group or adult advisor the place you do volunteer work) and who can attest to your personal qualities as observed in the specific activity.

Once you have chosen the people whom you'd like to ask to write a recommendation for you, follow the steps below.

1. Use the **Recommendation Request Form** available from the office when making your written request. You must list the colleges you are applying to on the form. The recommendation writer will then provide at one time all of the recommendations needed.

2. Make the request politely- not in the hall or between classes, and not matter-of-factly or nonchalantly. Make an appointment with the teacher to discuss your request. Make the request very early on, at the end of your junior year, well before you have any recommendation forms from the colleges ready for the teacher. It is especially important to get your references from teachers who are leaving at the end of the school year. You will want to ask the teacher if he or she can be supportive of your candidacy. The teacher has the right to say no. You do not have the

right to ask why the answer is no. If you ask in June of your junior year, tell the teacher that you will follow up with a written request early in September using the **Recommendation Request Form**. If you wait until September of your senior year to make verbal recommendation requests, follow up immediately with the written request.

3. Be clear when you speak to the teacher about what would be most helpful in the recommendation, comments about your work in the course, being a team player, performance in an academic competition, etc. The teacher is NOT to write a general summary of all of your activities, so please don't worry about providing your teacher with a list of such activities.

4. Don't dribble recommendation forms (provided by the schools you apply to) one by one to the teachers you ask to write recommendations. Give them one packet with all the forms they need. Each form should be clearly filled out by you (where appropriate). The teachers will give the completed recommendations and forms to Ms Chen to mail with your applications.

5. Three weeks before your deadlines, verbally thank the teacher for writing the letter for you. This will serve as a gentle reminder to the teacher that the deadline is fast approaching.

6. After the letters have been mailed, write personal thank you notes to everyone who wrote your recommendations. Remember that it takes a great deal of time to write just one recommendation and many of your teachers write several of them.

7. Once you're notified of your acceptances and rejections, inform those who wrote for you of your college plans so that they can feel appreciated.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST FORM

(You can pick up copies of this from the office)

Teacher's Name: _____

Date the recommendation needs to be given to Ms. Chen: _____

Student's Name: _____

Colleges the recommendation will be sent to:

To the Student: First, please check **one** of the following statements:

I understand that the letter of reference requested is **confidential** and I will not request to see a copy of it.

I wish that the letter of reference requested remain **not confidential** and I wish to read it before releasing it to any college.

Note that the your advisors advise that students request confidential recommendations to allow for the most accurate responses from your reference writers. The colleges receiving the recommendation prefer to receive **confidential** references.

Secondly, to help your teacher get focused, briefly list some of the qualities you have that he or she has observed and might include in your reference. Include specific examples that this teacher personally witnessed that demonstrated that you have these abilities. Mention also the special activities or projects in which she or he saw you shine. **Provide this "brainstorm" on the back of this page, or attach it to this sheet.**

To the Teacher: Please understand that the student requesting a recommendation should do so first in a verbal form when the two of you have the time to discuss this possibility. This can be done as early as May of the junior year in order to give you time to work on it before school begins in August. The student will follow up this request with the written form that you see in front of you. If you cannot or do not feel comfortable in this task, please let the student know as soon as possible. The student understands your rights and will not be expecting any form of explanation. If you require more information on the student, please see the his/her advisor. Remember that you are asked to write about the characteristics and knowledge of the student as **you** interact with him or her-- not all the different faces expressed by the student. You are responsible for giving copies of your recommendations to Catherine. Thank you!

TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

1. Download college applications in June of your junior year. **Make a photocopy of each application as it arrives and then read every word of the directions before you do anything.**
2. Use the photocopy as your "practice sheet" from which you will later type or neatly write the responses requested on to the original application whether it be a paper one or online. Remember to have a dictionary at your side and have a second person check for spelling and grammar errors.
3. Very important: **always photocopy your completed application before you give the original to Ms. Chen.** Admissions offices often lose or misplace papers. If your application is lost in the mail or misplaced in their office, you will want to have the photocopy to immediately mail off.
4. With each application you mail, send a **self-addressed, stamped postcard** that requests acknowledgement from the admissions office that they have received your materials. You can also include a note listing your email address for the school to respond to you. The school will then inform you if anything is missing from your application. Keep track of the dates on which you send applications so that if you do not receive your post card back, you will know to call and check to see if it has been lost in the mail. You will need to request United States airmail stamps ahead of time from a friend in the U.S. for the return postcard.
5. If you are applying to a state university, a college with rolling admissions, or the California University System, be sure to **check the application deadline carefully**; some of them are in November. The same goes for Early Admissions or Action. Also, it is often to your benefit to apply to these schools as **early as possible**. See your advisor if you have questions.
6. Your application will sometimes require a parent's signature and will always require a check for the application fee. Remember to send the check in U.S. dollars or use a credit card number when permitted. If either is omitted, it will delay and hurt your application process.
7. Always stay very organized! Keep all of your applications in folders (paper and digital). Use the **Application Checklist** and **College Profile form** provided in the **HIS College Handbook** which includes what each application requires and when it is due, and tell yourself often that you are in control and can manage this additional paperwork.

8. Being an overseas candidate means that communication with colleges is sometimes a bit slow if mail is involved. The earlier you get information to the schools, the more cushion you have if the colleges need more information from you. You must plan ahead not only for your applications, but also to make time for important tests and semester exams in December. Get your applications out of the way!

9. It is your responsibility to have your official test scores (SAT Reasoning Test, and if needed, the SAT Subject Tests, ACT, & TOEFL) sent by the respective agencies to the schools. You are to make these requests when you register online for the respective test.

10. Sometimes the obvious must be stated as a reminder of what our actions mean. The college application is a representation of who you are as a student and in a way, as a person. College admissions officers have a difficult task in deciding who to accept to their schools. Do not make their jobs any easier by carelessly throwing an application together. Misspelled words, faulty grammar, and inconsistencies will glare forth from your application. Do a good job!

TEN MOST COMMON ERRORS ON APPLICATIONS

Charles J. Shields in **The College Guide for Parents** offered what he considered the ten most common errors on applications:

1. Allowing mistakes in grammar and spelling.
2. Sending in an application marred by erasures, crossed-out words and whited-over sentences. Shields advises practicing first on a copy of the original application.
3. Selecting a major the institution does not offer. Students can find out what majors a college does offer by looking in the college catalogue.
4. Exaggerating the amount of time spent working at a job vs the time spent studying, resulting in impossible totals.
5. Mentioning every school-sponsored club or activity the applicant ever had contact with, instead of only those he or she participated in regularly.
6. Failing to say in the personal essay what the applicant can contribute to the institution.
7. Not addressing, either in the personal essay or in a cover letter, why certain grades or semesters are poor.
8. Not following up to make certain that all credentials required by the college have been received: transcript, recommendations, and test scores, in particular.
9. Failing to send the processing fee with the application.
10. Submitting the application after the stated deadline.

APPLICATION ESSAY GUIDELINES

1. Here is your chance to use all of those skills you have learned in your English classes! Follow the normal writing and editing procedures that you would for any important essay.
2. Be yourself. Use your own unique style. Do not write what you think the admissions staff wants to hear. The admissions officers reading your essay genuinely want to know you--what you think and do and believe. The essay should usually be short (one to two pages), focused, and thoughtful. Depending on the question asked of you, it can be highly logical and clearly organized or it can be a more creative, evocative piece.
3. Consider the following suggestions to the open-ended questions. There is no predisposed way of answering them. You may consider:
 - Citing an experience that you have had that changed your way of thinking about life (e.g., Outward Bound, travel, competitive sports, a volunteer experience, living the life of an international student)
 - Examining what you really like (e.g., spending time with people and explaining how your activities demonstrate this)
 - Speaking of a book (choose a good one!) or a person who has influenced your life and discussing how you have been influenced.
 - Writing about your planned career and why you have chosen it, including steps you have taken to achieve your goal.
4. Be as deep and as specific as you can but don't reveal anything you would later regret. But remember that you are writing about yourself and whatever the topic, let the admissions officers know who you are.
5. Colleges don't want: "I was born in Phoebus, Va. on June 1, 1991, and took my first step 2 years later...!"
6. Correct your essay many times. Don't submit it with any misspelled words, typographical errors, or grammatical mistakes! You will consult an English teacher, but you must write your own essay. (Remember that **you** must type the application and essay-- not your parents or a secretary. Do not give the admissions officer pause about whether this is, in fact, your own work.)
7. If you are asked an open-ended question, you may wish to present something other than an essay that expresses your talents: for instance, an original poem, an original music composition, or drawings. For very competitive schools, the submission of this type of materials might be necessary in addition to an essay. If you are considering this inclusion, consult your advisor.

8. Avoid simplistic answers to life's problems ("if we try hard enough, we can accomplish anything we want"). Instead try to keep your philosophical observations rooted to what has directly happened to you- what you have personally learned from your own experiences.
9. Think of the essay as an opportunity to get the admission office to pay attention to you. You have the opportunity to sell yourself, to show what makes you a good applicant for that school.

COMPLETING THE PACKET OF COLLEGE SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORTS, TRANSCRIPTS AND COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

1. During the first semester (Aug.-Nov.) of the senior year you must submit to Ms. Chen the college secondary school report forms for the colleges to which you are applying. You must fill out the student section of each form, sign, and date them. This will give Ms. Chen time to complete the forms and have them ready when you give her the full applications.
2. Write down the list of colleges and universities for which you would like Ms. Chen to prepare transcripts. Your deadline for turning in this list for January applications is **November 12th**. It is advisable to give your list to Ms. Chen as early as possible.
3. When you give Ms. Chen each counselor/secondary school report, she will then prepare an official transcript.
4. When you give Ms. Chen your college applications, you must put them in individual large envelopes with your name and the name of the college, to which the application should be mailed.
5. Submit these materials to Ms. Chen before the deadlines listed on your calendar.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT

The Secondary School Report sent by HIS includes:

- Secondary School Report Form.** This is the form sent to you by the college asking for a transcript and official school recommendation.
- Transcript.** A list of all grades, test scores, and academic honors received from your high school years at HIS or at schools previously attended since 9th grade. If you transferred to HIS during high school, we will only be able to include in our documentation the materials that you originally brought to us.
- Secondary School Profile.** An information sheet describing our school and its students.

Principal's Recommendation. The principal will write a recommendation for you based upon the information provided by you, your parents, your teachers, and his involvement with you.

MID-YEAR REPORT

Many colleges send you a mid-year report to be tuned in to Ms. Chen. Ms. Chen will complete the first semester grade section of the report. If there is a reference section on how you are doing in school, Mr. Loken will complete that section. Ms. Chen will then mail the forms to your schools.

COLLEGE NOTIFICATION

Colleges will send you their letter of acceptance or rejection. You could also be “wait-listed” which means you are on the list to be accepted if the school finds that a large number of students it had expected to enroll actually decide to attend other schools instead. With these openings, a number of students may be accepted off the waiting list. It is rare that one is accepted off the waiting list, however, so don’t count on it. Begin to make other plans. Your advisor will offer a full explanation of your status and what to do if you are wait-listed. When you receive an acceptance from the school you wish to attend, be sure to follow its instructions concerning payment of fees, selection of courses, housing reservations, etc.

If the colleges do not require anything immediately, acknowledge the acceptance with a letter to the Director of Admissions thanking him/her for the attention s/he has given you, and saying that you are looking forward to attending his/her college.

At the same time you should write to the other colleges which accepted you. Thank them for their consideration and ask them to withdraw your name from their rolls. You should explain that you have decided to attend another college and should name the college you have chosen. In withdrawing your name, you are giving an acceptance possibility to another applicant who may have been placed on the waiting list.

Do not forget to keep your advisor updated as to your acceptances and your final decision. This is also the time to write a formal thank you note to the teachers who wrote your recommendations. It would also be thoughtful to thank the office staff for their help in processing your applications. Furthermore, don’t forget to thank your parents for all their hard work in guiding you through high school and helping with the college application process.

The next step will be to prepare yourself to attend university. Talk to friends in college and start putting together your “to do” list to prepare for the big move. Also, it is helpful to visit your doctor for a full exam (your college will probably send you a health form to be completed by your physician). Get a copy of your medical records to take along with you.

FINANCIAL AID

(For U.S. colleges & universities)

What is Financial Aid?

It is a very organized program of providing financial assistance for students attending college to help them meet the costs of tuition and related expenses.

Who can apply for it?

Most of the aid offered can only be used by **citizens of the United States**. It is based primarily on need and secondly on merit.

How can we go about getting financial aid?

1. When applying to colleges, request their financial aid brochure and application. Fill out these forms and mail before deadlines. If you are not a U.S. citizen, be sure to request financial aid forms for foreign students.
2. If you are a U.S. citizen, apply online at the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Web site (www.fafsa.ed.gov) in December.
3. In February, check in with the financial aid departments of the schools to which you applied. Make sure that your papers are being processed correctly.
4. In April or May, you will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) which includes the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which determines how much of your tuition your family is expected to pay. The remaining portion will be covered by financial aid. This may be in the form of a grant, a loan, or a salary to be expected from a job known as "work study". Your EFC will at the same time be sent to the colleges where you requested financial aid that you listed on the FAFSA form.

How much assistance will I get?

The colleges you apply to will use your EFC to determine your family's ability to pay a certain amount of the school's tuition. Each school will present a "Financial Aid Package" to cover the remaining portion of the tuition. Remember that each university will have different offers depending upon their own tuition costs and the funds available to them in the given year. Colleges draw from three main areas in providing financial assistance; they are grants and scholarships, loans, and student employment known as "work study". (Colleges assist designated "work study" students to pay their expenses by hiring them to perform work that helps the institution to run.) Also, students receiving financial aid are expected to earn a certain amount of funding by obtaining summer employment.

How can I get further information?

There is a great deal of information provided by colleges and universities through pamphlets and their web sites. There are also dozens of books published on financial aid. Please see the **Resources** section of this handbook for more information.



OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM

Instructions: Complete this form with all applicable information. Student signature is required at time of ordering Official Transcript(s). Please complete accurate address information for each destination to mail Official Transcript(s) to and indicate the number of copies to be mailed. It is the student's responsibility to provide accurate address information on this form. Please give this form to Ms. Chen when completed.

Please print or type

Name (Last, First, M.I.)	Student ID:	Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)
Permanent Address		Home Phone Number
E-mail Address (gmail)		Cell Phone Number

_____ (Number) Official Transcript(s) to be picked up from Ms. Chen
 _____ (Number) Official Transcript(s) to be mailed to the address(es) as indicated below
 _____ (Number) Official Transcript(s) to be FAXED to _____ (Phone)

Address(es) for Official Transcripts(s) Mailing: (Use another form if more than four separate addresses are needed.)

_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:	_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:
_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:	_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:
_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:	_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:
_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:	_____ (Number) Official Transcripts(s) to:

_____ **Student Signature (Required)**

_____ **Date (MM/DD/YYYY)**