

**September
2019**

Important Dates

**Cup of
College**

October 10
8:00-9:00 a.m.
Welcome Center
Conference Room

PSAT

October 16
for all students in
grades
9-11
7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

*extended time
students will test the
entire day*

**Interview
Workshop**

October 16
11:00 a.m.-noon
Seniors Only

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St. David's School

Collegebeat...

An Update from the College Counseling Office

Admissions Deans Share Tips For College Applications By Brennan Barnard, *Forbes*, July 30, 2019

The end of summer feels imminent—not just because the airwaves are inundated with back-to-school advertisements, but also due to the growing frequency of calls to my high school counseling office. With the school year approaching, college applications are weighing heavily on rising seniors' minds. While colleges and universities have a variety of application plans and deadlines, many students can expect to have at least one application due by early November. Yes, this is over three months away, but the fall can be hectic with classes, sports and activities.

Some students will undoubtedly procrastinate until just days or hours before their first application deadline. However, twenty years of guiding students through this experience has proven that this approach rarely ends well. It usually leads to poorly written essays, hastily drafted supplements and sloppily completed applications. Instead of waiting until the pressure is on, students are well advised to be proactive; the following wisdom from admission leaders offers guidance about how best to do this.

Answer the right questions

Before students even begin filling out their applications, it is important to consider their approach, reflecting on who they are and who they hope to be. Matthew Hyde, dean of admissions at Lafayette College says,

It's quick and easy for candidates to share, and for admissions readers to assess a candidate's 'what'. However, the hope is to find the 'how' and the 'why' behind an applicant's 'what'. If a candidate is a chemistry loving, slam poet who pole vaults, cool, that's 'what' they are. But, 'HOW' and 'WHY' have they become a chemistry-loving, slam poet who pole vaults? Too many candidates stop at the 'what' and do not give the 'how' and the 'why.'

Take the time to explore these questions for yourself before you try to articulate the answers for the admission committee. Your application is not simply a resume of what you do, but a representation of who you are and what you have to offer a community. Hyde adds, "it's comfortable to keep things on the surface and to stay in motion with the expected, but too many candidates do not use their college search to reflect more deeply on who they are, and what truly matters to them."

Be prepared and let it marinate

To avoid being overwhelmed by college applications or submitting shoddy work, plan ahead. Arron Marlowe-Rogers, associate dean of undergraduate admissions at Wake Forest University explains,

What we see repeated most often is a failure to take one's time on the application. The Common Application and all of the supplements for individual colleges are in no way meant to be completed in one sitting. Once open in August, log in and complete an easy section or two (name, address, parent info). Look at the activities and honors questions but don't fill them out yet—let it marinate for a day or two and then log back in. Maybe at this point add a college or two - look at their *continued on page 3*

Fall 2019 College Visit Schedule

Sewanee , Sewanee, TN	Tuesday, September 3	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
UNC Charlotte , Charlotte, NC	Tuesday, September 3	12:30	Seminar Room 210 (Academic Building)
George Mason , Fairfax, VA	Tuesday, September 3	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Mercer , Macon, GA	Wednesday, September 4	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
ECU , Greenville, NC	Thursday, September 5	12:30	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
UNC Greensboro , Greensboro, NC	Friday, September 6	12:30	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Alabama , Tuscaloosa, AL	Tuesday, September 10	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
UChicago , Chicago, IL	Tuesday, September 10	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Davidson , Davidson, NC	Tuesday, September 10	12:05	Collaboration Room 209 (AB)
Providence , Providence, RI	Wednesday, September 11	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Virginia Tech , Blacksburg, VA	Wednesday, September 11	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Notre Dame , South Bend, IN	Thursday, September 12	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Appalachian State , Boone, NC	Thursday, September 12	12:30	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Dickinson , Carlisle, PA	Monday, September 16	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Oberlin , Oberlin, OH	Tuesday, September 17	1:00	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Villanova , Villanova, PA	Tuesday, September 17	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Carnegie Mellon , Pittsburgh, PA	Wednesday, September 18	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Clemson , Clemson, SC	Wednesday, September 18	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Furman , Greenville, SC	Wednesday, September 18	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Wofford , Spartanburg, SC	Thursday, September 19	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Samford , Birmingham, AL	Thursday, September 19	12:30	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Campbell , Buies Creek, NC	Friday, September 20	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
NC State , Raleigh, NC	Monday, September 23	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Durham , United Kingdom	Tuesday, September 24	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Stetson , DeLand, FL	Tuesday, September 24	12:30	Welcome Center Conf. Room
USC , Los Angeles, CA	Tuesday, September 24	12:30	Collaboration Room 204 (AB)
High Point , High Point, NC	Wednesday, September 25	12:05	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Northeastern , Boston, MA	Wednesday, September 25	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
SCAD , Savannah, GA	Wednesday, September 25	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
South Carolina , Columbia, SC	Thursday, September 26	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Hampden-Sydney , Farmville, VA	Monday, October 7	12:30	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Cal—Berkeley , Berkeley, CA	Monday, October 7	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Eastern , St. David's, PA	Tuesday, October 8	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
American , Washington DC	Wednesday, October 9	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
IE University in Spain , Segovia, Spain	Wednesday, October 9	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
UNC-Chapel Hill , Chapel Hill, NC	Thursday, October 10	10:00	All Saints' Chapel
*Please sign up in College Counseling prior to visit			
Georgia , Athens, GA	Thursday, October 10	12:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Elon , Elon, NC	Monday, October 14	12:30	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Auburn , Auburn, AL	Tuesday, October 15	12:30	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Baylor , Waco, TX	Friday, October 18	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Vanderbilt , Nashville, TN	Monday, October 21	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
RIT , Rochester, NY	Tuesday, October 22	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Roanoke , Roanoke, VA	Tuesday, October 22	12:30	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Washington Univ. , St. Louis, MO	Friday, October 25	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Rhodes College , Memphis, TN	Friday, October 25	12:30	Seminar Room 210 (AB)
Merrimack , North Andover, MA	Wednesday, October 30	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
TCU , Fort Worth, TX	Wednesday, October 30	3:15	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Rider , Lawrence Township, NJ	Tuesday, November 5	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room
Hofstra , Hempstead, NY	Wednesday, November 6	12:05	Welcome Center Conf. Room

Admissions Deans Share Tips... (Continued from page 1)

supplements but don't add any answers—chew on them for a bit. Point being, completion of the Common App is meant to take some time. Don't rush it.

Gil Villanueva, associate vice president and dean of admission at the University of Richmond adds, “because you must be accurate with your answers, collect official documents and have them near when you are completing the application.” A growing number of colleges and universities accept self-reported standardized test scores, so access your scores online and make sure you enter all the information correctly. Ask your counselor for a copy of your high school transcript so you can be sure to list your classes, credits and academic honors as they are reflected on official school materials.

Don't bury the lead

When it comes to the activities section, think quality over quantity. Before you start listing your extracurricular activities and other involvement, consider the story you want to tell. Some students mistakenly fear that if they do not fill all the allowable activity slots, they will look less competitive for admission. Not true. Colleges want to know about meaningful engagement and how that relates to your larger narrative. Applicants often overlook responsibilities they have at home or in their community. They are quick to list involvement in a school club but fail to mention that they help care for a younger sibling every afternoon or hold a part-time job to contribute to family finances. Jeff Schiffman, director of admission at Tulane University tells students,

Put things in the proper order. The first activity should be your biggest, most important activity that you've committed the most time to. Then, "de-escalate" from there. Don't hide the most important ones at the bottom and remember that when we're flipping through tens of thousands of resumes and activities lists, you want to grab our attention from the start. You know how we want you want to hook us in with that first sentence of your essay? Same thing here.

Falane Serna, director of admission at Pepperdine University agrees. He says, “for activities be as inclusive as possible, including those done outside of school. Celebrate and highlight every achievement and accomplishment. The college application process is not the time to be humble.” When possible, in an essay or short answer question expand on how this involvement has shaped you. F. Sheppard Shanley, senior associate director of admission at Northwestern University says, “many prompts ask you to describe an important experience and its effect on you. Don't forget to explain the ‘effect.’ Tell what you do that is different or how you think in a new way because of the experience.” He adds, “that's what matters. Let us hear your voice!”

Go the extra mile

Jim Rawlins is the director of admissions and assistant vice president for student services and enrollment management at The University of Oregon. He warns applicants not to “chicken out,” explaining that “many students will not do that one extra thing for the schools they're considering, and simply because they say they're afraid they won't get it, or that it'll hurt their chances of admission overall.” Rawlins says that is rarely the case, adding, “we can only consider students who take that step.” In the University of Oregon's applicant pool, he says, “I'm constantly coming across students who would have been great candidates for our Clark Honors College, Diversity Excellence Scholarship, or the Stamps Foundation award, but they didn't leave themselves time to do those few extra things to qualify for some of our most special offerings.”

Richmond's Villanueva adds, “use the Additional Information section of the Common Application to provide more information about you and/or your activities, or to provide more context about items that require more explanation.” Remember, aspects of your unique background and high school experience may seem obvious to you, but might need to be expanded upon for an admission officer who is eager to learn what matters most to you.

Continued on page 4

Spotlight on Scholarships

Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation invests in exceptional students who are dedicated to leadership, service, and action that positively affects others. 150 scholarships worth \$20,000 each are awarded annually.

Applications are due October 31, 2019 by 5 p.m.

For more details, please visit:

https://www.coca-colascholarsfoundation.org/apply/?SFMC_cid=EM206130- &rid=47335121



Admissions Deans Share Tips... (Continued from page 3)

Avoid redundancy

While additional information can be enlightening for an admission reader, too much of the same can wear on them. Tulane's Schiffman warns, "avoid application redundancy." He tells students, "you can do this by taking the 30,000 foot view of your application. If your activities section is all about tennis and we've got a great recommendation in there from your tennis coach and your short answer is about tennis, what do you think your essay should be about? Anything but tennis! Decide where each 'piece' of your application should fall and where your stories, interests and strengths will be shared. This might mean connecting with your school counselor (and it's a good time to get to know them better!)." Schiffman adds, "yes, we want to see consistency in your application, but when we read 38,000 applications a year and see something in your file that is repeated throughout, there's a chance we'll skip over the repeated parts. Don't miss an opportunity to share something new about yourself in different parts of your application."

Recommendations

Students are often apprehensive about picking teachers to write letters of recommendation on their behalf. Emily Roper-Doten, dean of admission and financial aid at Olin College of Engineering advises,

When it comes to who you want to ask to write your teacher recommendations, don't just think about the classes where you earned your highest grades. Trying thinking about what teacher would you want to have coffee with your application reader. Which teacher has stories to tell about you? Sometimes—not always—that means the teacher of the class where you earned your lowest grade, but that teacher may have seen you struggle and persist.

Consider the different voices and information that an admission officer already has in other parts of your application and then choose teachers who can provide a different perspective on you as a learner and classmate.

Be authentic

After you have completed a draft of your application, put it down for a few days and then review it with fresh eyes. Is it an accurate reflection of who you are and what you have to offer? Pepperdine's Serna tells students to "avoid trying to produce what you think colleges want to see. The best way to have your application stand out is by offering up an authentic and genuine self-presentation." He adds, "students who are intentional in building their application list with institutions that have missions, social environments, and academic atmospheres that are in line with who they are can focus on being themselves in the application." If these schools are good matches then they will value the individual you are rather than a persona manufactured in an attempt to game the process.

By planning ahead, being intentional and heeding the advice of these professionals, applicants will be able to communicate their strengths and interests in a compelling way that stays true to themselves and their hopes for the future.



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