

KEEFE TECHNICAL SCHOOL

College Planning Guide

College and Everything that goes with it! Guide for Students and Parents

Keefe Technical School Guidance Department

This booklet has been prepared by the Keefe Guidance Department to assist you in your college planning. It is to be used as a guide and a reference during the spring of junior year and the fall of senior year.

The college admissions process can feel really confusing but we've tried to simplify it for you. Our hope is that you will be able to use this book as a resource for all the pieces of the college process. However, the best way to really be on top of your game is to meet with your guidance counselor **OFTEN!**

I. A TIMETABLE FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

This is a general timetable of activities that relate to the college admissions process. Even if you are not thinking about college, many of these steps are important to your future. There are specific deadlines created by the guidance department and the various colleges that **YOU MUST PAY ATTENTION TO.**

Junior Year

Spring

- Meet with your guidance counselor!!!
- Review your transcript with your guidance counselor
- Select appropriate courses for your senior year to meet Keefe graduation requirements and college entrance requirements
- **Register for College Standardized Tests if planning to go to a 4 year college upon graduating from Keefe**
 - **Options Include:**
 - The May/June SAT Reasoning at www.collegeboard.com
 - The ACT at www.act.org
 - Fee waivers are available for any student on free/reduced lunch
 - Practice booklets are available in the guidance office
 - The TOEFL at www.toefl.com (for some students whom English is their second language)
 - SAT Subject Tests (only required by some colleges/universities)
 - Think about which colleges you'd like to explore.
 - Use Career Cruising to look up schools: www.careercruising.com
 - Username: JP
 - Password: Keefe
 - Begin to make a list of colleges and/or programs that fit your criteria and future goals (Anywhere between 5-15 colleges)
 - Attend local college fairs to examine a wide variety of schools
 - Visit college campuses, particularly over April vacation and the summer
 - **Ask TWO teachers for letters of recommendation before summer if the colleges you are interested in requires them**

Summer

- If you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college (Division I or II), register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)
- Find a full-time or part-time job, or participate in a camp or summer college program

- Continue to visit college campuses on your list. Take campus tours, and make appointments to have interviews with the admissions department for schools that you plan on applying to (if requested by the college).
- Update or create a resume – a record of accomplishments, activities, and work experiences you have had since you started high school

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER AND KEEP THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE AND SCHOOLS YOU ARE CONSIDERING. GET A JOB, VOLUNTEER, VISIT SCHOOLS, UPDATE YOUR RESUME, HAVE FUN!

Senior Year

September

- Meet with your guidance counselor!!!
- Check schedule to ensure you are meeting graduation and college admissions requirements
- Continue to visit colleges
- Narrow your list of colleges to 5-8 – divide into realistic, reach, safety, and financial safety schools
- Request college applications or review applications on-line. Check to see if the school uses the Common Applications (www.commonapp.org)
- Register for the October/November SAT Reasoning, ACT, TOFEL or SAT Subject Tests (fee waivers available in guidance if applicable)
- Remind your teachers when you will need to pick up recommendations or have them send it directly to your guidance counselor.
- Start college essays if you haven't already
- Organize and create a mater list of college deadlines and admissions requirements.
- If considering applying early decision/early action, talk you your counselor asap!

October

- Pick up your teacher recommendations or have them give them to your guidance counselor
- If applying early decision/early action, send in your applications now
- Sign up for December/January SAT I/II or ACT (if necessary)
- Visit the FAFSA website (www.fafsa.ed.gov) and request a pin number

November

- Continue to send your applications to the colleges you selected
- Remember that first quarter grades will be seen, so make them good
- **Attend Financial Aid Workshop with your parents/guardians!!!
(Letters will be sent out and it will be on the announcements)**

December

- Send your final applications before the Winter Break
- Make sure apply for a PIN on the FAFSA web-site: www.fafsa.ed.gov

January

- Make sure you are on track for graduation and keep your grades up.
- Bring envelopes to Guidance and send your first semester grades to the colleges where you have applied.

- File for Financial Aid on-line or by paper (FAFSA).
- If applicable, make sure you check on your NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse forms on-line.

February, March, and April

- Meet with your guidance counselor!!!
- Remember to monitor your applications to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time.
- Ask your counselor to send mid-term grades to any colleges that may need them
- Decide on the one college you will attend
- **Don't catch senioritis! Grades still matter!**

May

- Make sure you request a final transcript from guidance to be sent to the college you will attend in the Fall

June

- CONGRATULATIONS!!! You made it through high school. Enjoy your graduation and look forward to college!!!

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Massachusetts State College and University Admissions Standards

Minimum Admissions Requirements

These standards represent minimum requirements; meeting them does not guarantee admission.

1. Fulfill all requirements for the high school diploma upon enrollment
2. 16 required academic courses
3. A minimum grade point average (GPA) earned in college preparatory courses completed at the time of application.
4. Applicants must submit an SAT or ACT score

Academic Course Requirement

Sixteen College Preparatory courses distributed as follows. A course is equivalent to one full school year of study.

English: 4 courses

Mathematics: 3 courses (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2)

Sciences: 3 courses (including 2 with laboratory work)

Social Sciences: 2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)

Foreign Language: 2 courses (in a single language)

Academic Electives: 2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Science)

Minimum Required Grade Point Average (GPA) - Weighted: 3.00
(according to the Board of Higher Education GPA scale)

The average GPA of admitted students is typically higher than 3.00.

SAT Scores

Applicants who meet the GPA requirement do not have to use the sliding scale for admission, but they must still submit SAT or ACT scores.

Sliding Scale (used when GPA is lower than 3.00): Please refer to the BHE website above.

No applicant with a high school GPA below 2.00 may be admitted to a Massachusetts State College or to the University of Massachusetts.

Sliding Scale (used when GPA is lower than the minimum required GPA)

If an applicant's GPA falls below the required minimum, a sliding scale will apply. This scale should be used ONLY WHEN an applicant's GPA falls below the required minimum for the admission to the state colleges or UMass (3.00).

Sliding Scale for Freshman Applicants to UMass
(Amherst, Dartmouth, Lowell)

High School GPA	Combined SAT Reasoning Verbal and Math Must Equal or Exceed <i>(ACT Equivalent in Italics)</i>
2.51-2.99	950 <i>(20)</i>
2.41-2.50	990 <i>(21)</i>
2.31-2.40	1030 <i>(22)</i>
2.21-2.30	1070 <i>(23)</i>
2.11-2.20	1110 <i>(24)</i>
2.00-2.10	1150 <i>(25)</i>

Sliding Scale for Freshman Applicants to a State College
*(Fitchburg, Framingham, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Mass
Maritime, Mass College of Art, Salem, Westfield, Worcester)*

High School GPA	Combined SAT Reasoning Verbal and Math Must Equal or Exceed <i>(ACT Equivalent in Italics)</i>
2.51-2.99	920 <i>(19)</i>
2.41-2.50	960 <i>(20)</i>
2.31-2.40	1000 <i>(21)</i>
2.21-2.30	1040 <i>(22)</i>
2.11-2.20	1080 <i>(23)</i>
2.00-2.10	1120 <i>(24)</i>

NCAA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

As a prospective student-athlete at a Division I or II institution, you have certain responsibilities to attend to before you may participate. Information concerning who needs to register with the Clearinghouse and what documents should be submitted can be found in *The Guide for College-Bound Student-Athletes*.

IMPORTANT! There are new eligibility rules so be sure to look them up and understand them.

Division 1 or Division 2:

- Graduate from high school and earn the equivalent of a C (2.0) in a core curriculum of 16 college preparatory courses
- Achieve a minimum composite score of 820 on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the SAT Reasoning Test. For Division 1 colleges, this score will vary according to an eligibility index that includes

Grade Point Average.

Domestic Student Release Form - For students who have attended a U.S. high school for all academic years, and have or will graduate from a U.S. high school (including home school or an American school abroad), fill out the Domestic

Student Release form. Note: the Clearinghouse only performs certifications for students currently in their senior year or already graduated from high school.

Registered Student Login - For students already registered with the Clearinghouse. If you previously have registered with the Clearinghouse (using either a paper application or online submission) and would like to access your information.

The List of Approved Core Courses - Review the list of approved core courses and make sure your courses count toward eligibility.

For more information:

www.ncaa.org

www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Phone: 877-262-1492 or 317-917-6222

DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Here are some guidelines for figuring out what you want to do when you leave Keefe Technical School. For some of you that is college, but even if it is not...this list should provide you with a focused way to think about the future. All these things are active! Here's what you need to do:

- Do really well in school so you have **OPTIONS**.
- Think about who you are.
- Think about what you like.
- Think about your interests and abilities.
- Think about what education goals and career goals would best fit your interests and abilities.
- Talk to people about your hopes and dreams.
- Research **ALL** the options that are available to you.
- Read books
- Look on the web
- Send for information on specific programs and colleges
- Go to Guidance events
- Meet college reps when they come to Keefe
- Go on College Visits
- Sign up and take required standardized tests.
- Develop a list of colleges including safety's, good chances and reaches.
- Apply to colleges
- Fill out applications
- Write essays
- Ask teachers for recommendations
- Request transcripts
- Send out applications **WELL** before deadlines.
- Figure out financial aid.
- Try for some scholarships.
- Continue to do well in school.
- Enjoy your senior year.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A COLLEGE

In the United States.....

There are over 2000 colleges and universities

There are hundreds of vocational and technical schools

They can be:

- In the big city or in farm country
- Close to home or far, far away
- Large or small
- Coed or single sex
- Have open admission or be highly selective
- Expensive or cheap (well, lower in cost anyway)
- Super competitive or super social

Not to stress you out, but what you do after life at Keefe may be one of the most important decisions you ever make. Whatever you do next, be it college or something else, will influence your lifestyle, values, occupation, place of residence, perhaps even your love life. So now is the time to make thoughtful choices. We encourage you to think about ALL these factors:

Location

Where do you want to go to live and/or go to school? How far away from family and friends do you want to be? How often do you want to be able to come home? Is there a particular region of the country you like? Are you interested in an urban, suburban or rural setting?

Size

Would you prefer a small, medium or large institution? Does size matter to you? How many other students do you want in each of your classes? Do you like “everyone to know your name” or do you like to “get lost in the crowd?”

Cost

How will finances play a role in what you decide to do after Keefe? How much can you and/or your family afford to spend on your education? Will you file a FAFSA? Do you know what kind of financial aid is available to you? Have you thought about loans and payment plan options? Are there scholarship opportunities available to you?

Standards for Admission

Have you investigated how competitive admission is at the schools you are thinking about? Do you know what each school is looking for? Are the schools you are looking at a “good fit” for you? Have you checked to see how your grades and standardized test scores match up with each college’s averages?

Do you have a combination of reach, probable and safety schools?

Safety: Your credentials are higher than the school's averages. You are confident you will be admitted to this school.

Probable Acceptance: Your credentials for admission are truly competitive with what a particular school is looking for. You are qualified for admission.

Reach: Your chances for admission are less likely based on your credentials, but there is a possibility of admission. Your credentials are not as strong as the students who are typically admitted, but there is a niche you can fill at that college and you really want to go there.

Choice of Programs

Have you considered schools that offer programs you're interested in? If you are selecting schools based on a specific academic area, are you sure that's what you want to study? Have you considered the overall qualities of each school? Are you looking for liberal arts, professional training, or both? How important is it for you to have a wide variety of choices in terms of majors and courses?

Some Other Important Questions to Ask Yourself

- What do you want from your college experience?
- In what type of environment do you learn best and feel the most comfortable?
- Do you thrive in a competitive environment or do you prefer a more relaxed laid back approach?
- Do you like lots of different kinds of people or are you more comfortable with people who are like you?
- What are your goals and values?
- Does the school provide adequate academic and social support services?
- How will you define your success after high school?

Resources for Finding Schools that Work for You

Career Cruising: www.careercruising.com (Username: JP, Password: keefe)

College Board: www.collegeboard.com

Petersons: www.petersons.com

There are tons of books on colleges in the Keefe Guidance Office on Colleges and picking a College Major. Make an appointment with your counselor and take a look!

TOP 10 TIPS ABOUT COLLEGE VISITS

The college visit is very important! You should check out a variety of schools to see where you might like to spend the upcoming years. Here are 10 things you should think about when checking out campuses.

1. DO RESEARCH ON SCHOOLS TO DECIDE WHERE TO VISIT.
2. FIND OUT WHEN COLLEGES HAVE OPEN HOUSES.
3. START VISITING COLLEGES DURING YOUR JUNIOR YEAR, WHEN THESE SCHOOLS ARE STILL IN SESSION.
4. LEARN WHAT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FOLKS ARE LOOKING FOR IN AN APPLICANT.
5. FIGURE OUT IF THE SCHOOL IS A PLACE YOU'D WANT TO LIVE FOR FOUR YEARS.
6. CHAT WITH CURRENT STUDENTS TO GET THE INSIDE SCOOP.
7. ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS!!
8. TAKE TIME TO VISIT A DEPARTMENT, CLUB, OR ACTIVITY YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN.
9. IN A NOTEBOOK, WRITE DOWN YOUR IMPRESSIONS ABOUT THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS YOU VISIT. IT WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU LIKED AND DISLIKED ABOUT EACH SCHOOL
10. WHEREVER YOU GO, WHATEVER YOU DO, MAKE SURE TO PRESENT YOURSELF WELL.

STANDARDIZED TESTS 101

College admission tests provide very important information for you as well as for colleges. Your scores give you a way to compare yourself with students already attending the colleges you are considering. They are also a way to show what you've achieved and learned throughout your academic life. Your scores give colleges a way to compare you with other students nationally. They are also a fair, standardized way for admission staff to make important decisions about your likelihood of being a successful, contributing member of their freshman class. Here is a list of widely used college admission tests:

SAT Reasoning Test

- 3 hour and 45 minute test, primarily multiple choice, which measures critical reading, mathematical, and writing abilities.
- Administered seven times a year on Saturday mornings. It is given at local area high schools in October, November, December, May, and June.
- We recommend all juniors take the SAT Reasoning Test in May or June and seniors in October.
- Register with your guidance counselor either online at www.collegeboard.com, by phone, or by mail. You may obtain both the "Registration Bulletin" and "Taking the SAT Reasoning Test" in the Guidance Office.

SAT Subject Tests

- One-hour tests in particular subject areas. A person is able to take three subject tests on the same day.
- Not all colleges require SAT II. Check to see if the colleges you are interested in require them.
- We recommend you take each test when the subject matter is freshest in your mind. For example, if you are taking Chemistry this year and doing well in it, you may want to take that test at the end of this year. For courses that are continuing (Spanish, for example), you should plan on taking the test after at least two years of formal study. Register in the same way you signed up for the SAT Reasoning Test.

SAT Reasoning and Subject Test Calendar, Spring 2009

Test Date Registration Deadline* Late Registration* (Late Fee Applies)

May 2, 2009	March 31, 2009	April 9, 2009
June 6, 2009	May 5, 2009	May 15, 2009

* Check collegeboard website for Fall 2009 test dates and deadlines

* Mailed Registrations must be POSTMARKED by the Deadlines above.

SAT Registration

- Online: www.collegeboard.com
- Mail: Please see the SAT Registration Booklet
- Fee Waivers: Please see your Guidance Counselor (You are eligible if you qualify for free or reduced lunch at Keefe Tech)

The American College Testing Program (ACT)

Alternative to the SAT. Check to see whether the colleges you are interested in accept the ACT. (Most do!) The ACT is a national college admission examination that consists of subject area tests in: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four subject area tests and a 30 minute Writing Test. ACT results are accepted by virtually all U.S. colleges and universities. The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes to complete with breaks (or just over four hours if you are taking the Writing Test). Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes if you are taking the Writing Test).

In the U.S., the ACT is administered on five national test dates—in October, December, February, April, and June. In selected states, the ACT is also offered in late September. The basic registration fee includes score reports for up to four college choices for which a valid code is listed at time of registration. You can obtain information about the ACT at www.act.org or in the Guidance Office.

2009 Spring ACT Test Dates

Test Date Registration Deadline (Late Fee Required)

June 13, 2009 May 8, 2009 May 9-22, 2009

2009 – 2010 ACT Test Dates

September 12, 2009

October 24, 2009

December 12, 2009

*Registration deadlines to be announced by ACT

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

- Many colleges require either the TOEFL of all applicants whose first language is not English. Check with each of your colleges to find out their own individual requirements.
- The TOEFL is taken in addition to the SAT's.

- You can obtain information about the TOEFL at www.toefl.com or the Guidance Office.
- This is a complicated registration process...START EARLY and work with your guidance counselor!!!

ADMISSIONS LINGO

There are so many things to know about this process, so we put together a basic list of terms we think you might want to be familiar with. Here they are!

Associate's Degree = A degree granted by a college or university after the satisfactory completion of the equivalent of a two-year, full-time program of study (or its part-time equivalent).

Bachelor's Degree = A degree granted by a college or university after the satisfactory completion of a four-or five-year, full time program of study (or its part-time equivalent).

CEEB Code for Keefe Tech is 220854

Common Application = The standard application form accepted by many colleges and universities.

CSS Profile = A form required by many private institutions for financial aid purposes.

Deferred Admissions = The practice of permitting students to postpone enrollment, usually for one year, after acceptance to college.

Dual Enrollment = The practice of students enrolling in college courses while still in high school.

Early Action = Students who apply under a college's early action plan receive a decision earlier rather than the standard response date **but are not required** to accept the admission offer or to make a deposit prior to May 1.

Early Admissions = The policy of some colleges of admitting certain students who have not completed high school – usually students of exceptional ability who have completed their junior year.

Early Decision = Students who apply under a college's early decision plan **commit** to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) = A form completed by all applicants for federal student aid. Forms may be filed any time after January 1 of the year for which one is seeking aid.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED) = A series of five tests that individuals who did not complete high school may take through their state education system to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate. Many colleges accept satisfactory GED test results in place of high school graduation.

Honors Program = Any special program, offered by some colleges, for high achieving students that offers the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.

Liberal Arts = The study of the humanities (literature, the arts, and philosophy), history, foreign languages, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences.

Open Admission = The college admissions policy of accepting virtually all applicants with high school diplomas or their equivalent: generally offered by community college.

Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) = Programs conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Air Force, Army, and Navy. Naval ROTC includes the Marine Corps (the Coast Guard and Merchant Marines do not sponsor ROTC programs).

Rolling Admission = An admission procedure by which the college considers each student's application as soon as all the required materials have been received. The college usually notifies an applicant of its decision without much delay.

Transcript = A copy of a student's official academic record listing all courses taken and grades received.

Wait List = A list of students who meet the admission requirements, but will only be offered a place in the class if space becomes available.

HOW COLLEGES CHOOSE CANDIDATES

Have you ever wondered how colleges and universities decide which candidates they will accept? When a school receives your application, an admissions director and their committee assess all your qualifications and how you might be a good fit with their community. It's a complicated process and there are a lot of factors that come into play.

Scholastic Record/Transcript – The quality of work you have done in high school is the single **MOST IMPORTANT** factor in the admissions process. It is imperative that admissions people see an academic program that incorporates both challenging courses and good grades.

Senior Schedule and Course Grades – Colleges expect that you will continue to challenge yourself during your senior year of high school. Your senior schedule should be thoughtfully considered and include rigorous coursework. Admissions Officers also expect that you will continue to take the senior courses indicated in your application. Many schools use your senior grades as an indicator of potential success in college level classes so you want to do your best throughout the entire year. Your grades as a senior are particularly important if you have struggled previously in your academic career.

College Board Test Scores – How much emphasis is placed on standardized test results depends on each college's policy. It is important to remember that test scores are a part of the total applicant profile. They compare you to other students in your age group nationwide. At most colleges test scores alone do not exclude a student from admission. Just an FYI...there are some schools that do not require Standardized Tests. These schools include all Massachusetts state 2-year colleges (i.e. Mass Bay, Quinsigamond)

The Essay - Many colleges and job applications require an applicant to write an essay. It is generally written on a specific topic and is carefully read by a committee. Your essay should be well thought out, well written, and proofread, perhaps by an English teacher. **You will work on your essays in English class. Take advantage of the help!!**

Recommendations – Colleges will request one or more individual teacher's evaluations. Forms for these recommendations are included in the application packet. It is the student's responsibility to ask teachers early so he/she has time to write thoughtful letters. A college may also require a descriptive statement by your guidance counselor (a good reason to meet with your counselor – so he/she

can write a glowing report about how great you are, if you need it!). ASK EARLY!!

Extracurricular Activities – Colleges are not necessarily looking for a long list of activities. They tend to prefer in-depth participation and leadership in a few areas of interest. They want to know that you have initiative, curiosity, and motivation beyond your studies. They are hoping to find people who will come to their school and be an involved member of their community.

The Interview – You will need to find out whether or not an interview is required at the colleges to which you apply. You can schedule informational interviews at colleges during the summer months. This can help you get your questions answered and assist in your decision-making process. You may be required to have an admissions interview after you send in your application. Some colleges will ask you to meet with an alumni/alumnae interviewer after you apply to a college. Whoever you meet with...be yourself!

Marked Improvement in School Achievement from Year to Year Maybe your junior and senior year grades are stronger than they were freshman and sophomore year. Perhaps you've gone up a level in some courses. This shows that you are growing as an individual, taking your academics seriously, and challenging yourself!

Community Service – Colleges like to see that you are committed to the world around you. Thoughtful commitment to a cause or social issue shows depth and integrity.

Academic and Personal Integrity – Admissions representatives look for applicants, who will positively contribute to their campus community, inside and outside of the classroom. In other words, they want good, honest, hard-working students like you!!!

Neat and Accurate Application – Make sure everything is included and is presented without rips, stains, misspelled words, etc...

Special Talent – Any admissions committee seeks out uniqueness in your admissions credentials. If there is something unusual, different, or exciting about you that sets you apart from other candidates, make sure to share that information. It could produce a favorable decision for you; colleges and employers like interesting students.

THE COLLEGE SELECTIVITY INDEX

There are a lot of colleges out there and each one has certain standards. When you read about schools in different books they are usually described in terms of competitiveness. This chart will give you an idea of what different colleges general cut-offs in terms of GPA, SAT score for each section, and class rank. The numbers below are averages and are **not set in stone**.

REMEMBER: The Keefe Tech GPA is weighted based on how many College Preparatory classes you took and many schools recalculate it. However, this should give you an idea of the type of school that might be right for you and help you assess what is a reach, a probable acceptance, or a safety.

A+
4.0 GPA
Close to 800 (for each section)
Top 5% of class
Most Competitive
(ex. Harvard, Yale, Wesleyan, etc)

A+/A
4.0 GPA
700-800 (for each section)
Top 10% of class
Highly Competitive
(ex. BU, Northeastern, WPI, Bentley, etc)

A / A-
3.7 GPA
600-700 (for each section)
Top 15-30% of class
Very Competitive
(ex. UMASS-Amherst, Clark, Quinnipiac, etc)

A- / B+
3.3 GPA
550-600 (for each section)
Top 30-50% of class
Competitive
(ex. UMASS- Dartmouth, Framingham State, Regis, etc)

B+ / B-
2.7 GPA
450-550 (for each section)
Top 66% of class
Less Competitive
(ex. Becker College,

Newbury, Johnson and
Wales, etc)

B- / C

2.0 GPA

Below 450 (for each section)

Top 75% of class

Non- Competitive High School Diploma

SOME THOUGHTS ON INTERVIEWS

In an interview, you naturally want to do what you can to make a good impression on the interviewer. An admissions person can know only what you tell them about yourself by the way you look, act, and answer questions.

Here are some things to think about:

1. Dress neatly.
2. Be on time.
3. Don't chew gum.
4. Know the college.
5. Greet the receptionist.
6. Wait patiently.
7. Shake hands with the interviewer.
8. Maintain eye contact.
9. Try to control any nervous behavior.
10. Be thoughtful about your answers to questions.
11. Sit up and have good posture.
12. Talk about what you do well.
13. Know your academic record.
14. You can bring a student copy of your transcript with you.
15. Be prepared to talk about why you are interested in this college
16. Be yourself at all times
17. Make sure that you note your interviewer's name and contact info by obtaining a business card.
18. Send a handwritten thank you note!

Some Questions You May Be Asked:

- Why are you considering this college?
- What are your career goals?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What will you bring to our school (skills, interests, uniqueness)?
- What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?
- What is the most important thing you've learned in high school?

- How would your best friend describe you?
- What newspaper, magazines, books do you read?
- To which other schools are you applying?
- Where does our school fall on your list?

Some Questions You Could Ask:

- What would a typical freshman schedule look like?
- What is the typical size of a freshman English class?
- What are the residence halls like? Is housing guaranteed for freshman?
- What percent of the student body lives on campus?
- What percent of students receive financial aid?
- What is your retention rate?
- How is a faculty advisor assigned?
- What type of person does well at this institution?

What Is This Thing Called “The Common Application?”

The Common Application is an application brought to you by a wide variety of colleges and universities. The schools listed on the form got together and developed materials that you can use to apply to all of them. There are some advantages to the “Common App.” The “Application for Undergraduate Admission” need only be completed once; photocopies may be sent to any number of the participating colleges. The same is true of the “School Report Form” and “Teacher Evaluation” portions. This procedure can simplify the college application process by saving time and eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort.

Most Students are Opting to do the Common Application On-Line

<http://www.commonapp.org>

Go On-line to find a list of schools that accept the Common Application

Steps for filling out the Paper Version of Common Application:

1. Fill out the “Application for Undergraduate Admissions.”
2. Photocopy your completed application for each college on your list.
3. Mail it to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at each school you are applying to along with the appropriate fee. Fees and deadline are listed in the Common Application booklet.

4. Give the School Report Form to your guidance counselor for completion along with the list of the schools to which you need it sent.
5. Ask teachers to complete the Teacher Evaluation form or submit a separate letter or recommendation and mail it to the colleges.
6. Request supplemental information forms from schools that require them. They are noted in the Common Application booklet.

THE DREADED COLLEGE ESSAY

We recognize that the essay can be a major source of stress but if you put in some time writing your essay, it will be done before you know it. Lets get started!!

STEP 1: Brainstorming an Essay Topic

The most important part of your essay is the subject matter. Make sure to take some time to brainstorm ideas. Here are some questions that might spark some ideas:

- What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments?
- Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from anyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. How have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
- What was the most difficult time in your life and why? How did it change your perspective on life?

- Have you ever struggled for something and then succeeded? What was it that made you successful?
- Have you experienced a moment of epiphany when your eyes were opened to something new and it made you realize something about yourself or the world.
- What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities? What made you continue your involvement in them?
- What are your goals and dreams for the future? How does this particular university fit into your plans?

If you have writer's block, consider these options:

1. Ask for help from parents, friends, and teachers
2. Consider your childhood.
3. Consider your role models.

STEP 2: Selecting an Essay Topic

You must now confront the underlying problem of the admissions essay. You must consider topics that will allow you to synthesize your important personal characteristics and experiences into a coherent whole while simultaneously addressing your desire to attend a specific institution. While most admissions essays allow great latitude in topic selection, you must also be sure to answer the questions that were asked of you. Leaving a lasting impression on someone who reads 50 to 100 essays a day will not be easy, but we have compiled some guidelines to help you get started. Consider the following questions before proceeding:

- Have you selected a topic that describes something of personal importance to your life?
- Is your topic a gimmick? That is, do you plan to write your essay in iambic pentameter or make it funny? We don't advise it as nothing is worse than having an admissions officer misunderstand what you are trying to say.
- Does your essay give new and important information about who you are? It should.
- Have you used vivid supporting details and concrete examples to support your essay topic?
- Can you keep the readers interest?
- Is your topic overdone?
- Is your topic controversial? If so, you must acknowledge counter arguments without sounding arrogant.

- Will an admissions officer remember your topic after a day of reading hundreds of essays?

STEP 3: Writing the Essay

- Make sure you fully answer the question completely.
- Be original and be yourself.
- Big words don't necessarily mean good words.
- Use imagery and clear vivid prose.
- Spend the most time on your introduction and conclusion.
- Use transitions.
- Share your draft with your English teacher.
- Revise, Revise, Revise!!!

SHOW ME THE MONEY: FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

There are many sources of financial aid, the most important being from the federal government, state government, and the colleges themselves.

Helpful Website: www.mefacounselor.org (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority)

Application Forms Used for Financial Aid

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

- Available on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov, and in the guidance office.
- File January 1 or as close to that as you can during your senior year.

LOANS

There are several low interest loans available to college students with financial need. These include the Federal Perkins Loan, Stafford Loan, and Plus Loan (for parents). These loans may be accessed by completing the FAFSA application or outside agencies.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships based solely on an applicant's accomplishments without regard to financial need are considered merit scholarships. Some colleges give them in an attempt to attract high achieving students, students from different ethnic backgrounds, and students with special talents.

NATIONAL and LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- National scholarship searches can be done at www.fastweb.com
- Local Applications available in the Guidance Office
- **There will be a financial aid night in the fall hosted at Keefe (November/December). A representative from the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority will be present to walk everyone through the process**
- **There will also be meetings on filling out the in-house Scholarship Packet. This will take place after the Winter Break next year.**
- **Stay tuned for dates and times!!!!**