INTRODUCTION

St. Albans School
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"At St. Albans we take it for granted that our boys will go to college, and that is fitting. We have always been and we are likely to remain a college preparatory school. Still, this does not mean that we must give undue concern to college admission. To do so would resemble the unhealthy concern an occasional boy has about grades. Although we like our boys to get good marks, we do not want them to work toward that end alone. Instead, we want them to have the fun of pursuing a subject for its inherent interest, to have the pleasure of experiencing the satisfaction of high achievement for its own sake. Any grade should be incidental to the stimulation of intellectual curiosity. Likewise, attending college should ideally be an incidental result—the natural next step to a secondary education filled with the satisfaction of hard work and of academic achievement. At St. Albans we do not want parents and boys to worry about college admissions. We want to be concerned with giving boys a sound education; the future will then take care of itself."

~ From Letters from a Headmaster's Study by Canon Charles Martin, April 16, 1963

Despite the hype and anxiety that surrounds the college search and application process in 2019-2020, Canon Martin's words of the past still ring true today. If a boy pursues education for its own sake, stretching himself academically, involving himself extracurricularly, and finding his place personally, his college search and application process will follow quite naturally. He will approach the end of his time at St. Albans with a greater understanding of himself and a greater understanding of those universities that are the best match for him. "Getting in" is a byproduct of the hard work, self-exploration, acceptance of challenge, and expansion of thought that is an everyday reality at St. Albans School. We believe that the college search process is one of education, self-discovery, and personal growth.
Dear Class of 2020,

Welcome to the official start of your college search. This will be a fulfilling yet complicated time of your lives, as you decide what you would like to do once you graduate from St. Albans. We know that, as you look forward to the milestones that will come with your Sixth Form year, the thought of college weighs heavily on many of your minds. Where will you apply? Where will you go? Who will you become? It is our great hope that, this year and next, we will work together to ensure that your college search and application process is what it needs to be: organized, reflective, thoughtful, focused, and driven by and centered around you.

The purpose of this planning guide, and one of the primary goals of college counseling at St. Albans, is to demonstrate that the college admission process can be a rational and positive experience for all involved. As a result of the realistic self-evaluation that you must make, you will discover more about yourself and take a significant step in preparing for life after St. Albans. You will need to hone your evaluative and decision-making skills, take responsibility for organizing and managing a detailed process, and face positively the challenges that college admissions presents. You will have to work cooperatively with your counselors, with your parents, with colleges, and with your classmates. At the end, we hope you will feel positive about yourself and the college you will attend.

Throughout the entire college selection process, we in the College Office will make every effort to reinforce your strengths and support you in identifying your most important concerns and interests. While most St. Albans students approach college selection with a blend of realism and self-awareness, too often we have seen young people define their value as individuals—positively or negatively—on the basis of college admission results or standardized test scores. You will learn more about your strengths, weaknesses, talents, and unique characteristics during the college process, but none of these should be seen as enhanced or diminished by the decisions of college selection committees.

It is our belief that we will work best together if our expectations of each other are clear. Most important to us is that you recognize that it is you—not us, not your parents, not your teachers—who will define the success of your college search. Our job is not to get you into college; our job is to help you help yourself get into college. The role of the college counselor is a complex one; we serve as “middlemen” between you (our primary concern) and colleges (our secondary concern). We may question you closely to gain some perspective on your dreams and aspirations and also to keep the college application process one of integrity. We will be your strongest advocates, your devil’s advocates, and your personal red-tape artists; what we want more than anything is for you to find the university that represents your perfect match. Whatever choices you make, we stand ready to help you untangle the options and prepare your applications. We want you to know that confidentiality is an important part of this process. Our conversations will remain between us; family information is private. If you ask, “who else is applying to X University?” we will answer, “we cannot tell you that” in order to protect others’ privacy, just as we will protect yours.

In an age in which admissions statistics and application “strategies” make national news headlines, anxiety unnecessarily dominates this age-old process of applying to college. What we have learned from many years of helping students apply to college is this: it all works out. At its core, the college search and application process is a life experience. You will learn more about yourself this year than you ever have, and you will emerge from your triumphs and disappointments better equipped for whatever further challenges are ahead in your life.

We are delighted to have the opportunity to share this great adventure with you.

Sincerely,

Nikki Magaziner Mills          Timothy Hudson          Samuel Schaffer          Linda Stratton
THE SEARCH PROCESS

St. Albans School
COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION CALENDAR
CLASS OF 2020

JANUARY 2019
January 11—Registration deadline for the February 9 ACT
January 24—College Night for students and parents, featuring college admissions deans
♦ Small group sessions for students, introducing the college search and selection process

FEBRUARY 2019
February 4—Capital Case Study Night (mock admissions committees) for juniors and their parents
February 8—Registration deadline for the March 9 SAT (register on www.sat.org)
February 9—ACT
February 21—College Landscape Night for parents
♦ Complete the “Finding the Right Match” self-evaluation questionnaire and schedule a meeting with your college advisor.
♦ Individual student appointments. You should meet with your college counselor at least twice before Spring Break and at least once after Spring Break. You must complete your questionnaire before your first meeting. You may bring your parents with you to your third meeting.
♦ If you are interested in attending a military service academy: submit a candidate form, apply for a summer leadership academy, and contact your senator or member of congress.

MARCH 2019
March 8—Registration deadline for the April 13 ACT (register on www.act.org)
March 9—SAT (no Subject Tests offered)
Date TBD—Athletic Information Night for potential college athletes
♦ Individual student appointments
♦ Spring Break—begin to visit colleges, research colleges

APRIL 2019
April 5—Registration deadline for the May 4 SAT
April 10—Washington Area Independent Schools College Fair (evening)
April 13—ACT
♦ Individual student and family appointments

MAY 2019
May 3—Registration deadline for the June 1 SAT
May 3—Registration deadline for the June 8 ACT
May 4—SAT and SAT Subject Tests
♦ Individual student and family appointments

JUNE 2019
June 1—SAT and SAT Subject Tests
June 6—Nuts-n-Bolts College Application Workshop
June 8—ACT
June 14—Registration deadline for the July 13 ACT
♦ Individual student and family appointments
♦ Ask teachers to write letters of recommendation
♦ Register with the NCAA, if appropriate
♦ SCHOOL IS OUT—VISIT UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, DO RESEARCH, HAVE A BREAK

JULY 2019
July 13—ACT
SCHOOL IS OUT—VISIT UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, WRITE DRAFTS OF COMMON APP ESSAY (www.commonapp.org)—RELAX.

AUGUST 2019
August 24—SAT and SAT Subject Tests
SCHOOL IS OUT—VISIT UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, START LOOKING AT APPLICATIONS, NARROW LIST, WRITE DRAFTS OF ESSAYS.
SEPTEMBER 2019
September 3—Registration Day College Application Workshop (required)
September 14—ACT
♦ Ask teachers to write letters of recommendation
♦ Submit applications for rolling admissions schools (UK universities, Indiana, Alabama…)
♦ Individual student and family appointments
♦ Send standardized test scores to colleges, especially if applying early
♦ Colleges visit St. Albans
♦ Families applying for financial aid should register for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov and for the CSS Profile application at https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org

OCTOBER 2019
October 1—File FAFSA if applying for need-based financial aid
October 5—SAT and SAT Subject Tests
October 18—Early Decision/Early Action/Priority list due to Ms. Stratton
October 26—ACT
♦ Individual student and family appointments
♦ Colleges visit St. Albans
♦ School sends transcripts and recommendation letters to Early Decision/Early Action/Priority colleges

NOVEMBER 2019
November 1 & November 15—Deadlines for most Early Decision/Early Action applications
November 1—Priority deadline for University of Maryland and University of Texas
November 1-30—University of California colleges application window
November 2—SAT and SAT Subject Tests (the only time you can take language subject tests with listening)
♦ Individual student and family appointments
♦ Colleges visit St. Albans

DECEMBER 2019
December 1—Priority application or EA deadline for some universities
December 6—Final list (including your backup plan for Early Decision/Action applications) due to Ms. Stratton
December 7—SAT and SAT Subject Tests
December 14—ACT
December 15—Notification date for many Early Decision/Early Action applications
♦ All applications should be completed prior to Winter Break!
♦ School sends transcripts and recommendation letters to colleges

JANUARY 2020
January 1 & January 15—Regular Decision application deadlines; some Early Decision II deadlines
♦ Notify College Office of any changes to your list
♦ EXAMS!! Study hard…
♦ Remember that colleges will review mid-year and final transcripts; second semester grades DO COUNT!

FEBRUARY 2020
♦ Some application deadlines

MARCH 2020
Mid-month—Release of some admissions decisions

APRIL 2020
April 1-15—Release of the remainder of admissions decisions

MAY 2020
May 1—National Candidate’s Reply Date: deadline for your enrollment decision and deposit at your college

JUNE 2020
♦ Final St. Albans transcripts sent to matriculating colleges
Getting Started

The process of selecting the college or university that is the best place for you is exactly that: a process. It's impossible to make good decisions about where you will apply or attend by flipping quickly through a book, opening a magazine with pages of rankings, or asking a friend where he thinks you should go. In order to emerge from this process with a thoughtful, sound college list and, ultimately, a wide range of options, you need to look closely at yourself and research thoroughly the many opportunities at different colleges around the country and the world. Nobody is like you. The more that you think about you, and what you want and what you need, the easier it will be to find a college that will be the perfect match. And, the more you think about you and what sets you apart from the crowd, the better able you will be to present yourself positively and reflectively on the many college applications that await you.

Unfortunately, there are people who approach college selection by generating a list of colleges they regard as having acceptable name recognition and then doing their best to "package" themselves in the mold that they believe each particular college will find attractive. Not only does such an approach allow the tail to wag the dog, but it also may result in students attending colleges that do not serve their particular needs and interests or provide appropriate academic challenges. Far better to find out about yourself first, then investigate what colleges have to offer and decide which ones best meet your interests and talents.

Some tips about logistics:

- Get organized! Figure out a place in your room or house that will hold all of your college materials. You will soon be receiving lots and lots of mail—both email and snail mail. You will need to organize it as it comes in—set aside a "yes, I'm interested" pile/email folder, a "no, I'm not interested" pile/email folder, and a "not sure if I'm interested" pile/email folder. When you have time, look carefully at the "yes" and "not sure" piles; recycle/delete the rest.

- Figure out a good way to organize printed information—brochures, business cards, mailings, important emails—from your favorite schools. Keep it all in one place! Accordion files work well.

- Consider your email address. If you have several email addresses, you will want to choose one to use for your college process. Your stalbansschool.org email address is a good choice! But don't forget to check it! Many colleges will communicate with you using email exclusively—make sure you don't miss important information/opportunities because you haven't read your email! The College Office will communicate with you via your stalbansschool.org address.

- Invest in some college guidebooks. Like any other research project, you will need to consult many different sources to find the true story. Use a combination of online resources and objective and subjective guidebooks to start.

- Memorize your school code: 090165. You will need this number on multiple occasions throughout the process. You may want to memorize your social security number as well!

And now, on to your college list…

BUILDING YOUR COLLEGE LIST

How does one intelligently examine the thousands of colleges available in the United States and abroad? We would like you to remember two maxims as you consider this question. First, there will probably not be one magic choice. There are likely to be many institutions where you will thrive. Second, the only poor college choices are uninformed choices, those made without enough information.

As you begin to consider the characteristics of colleges that will be important to you, you will have to ask yourself several important questions. To start, there are a few particular areas you should address as you begin to consider your options:

SIZE: Do you want a large university or a smaller college? How important is class size to you? Knowing your teachers? Working with professors rather than graduate assistants? Having a sense of community on the campus? Will you perform best in a class of hundreds, where you can sit back, take notes and process information independently? Or do you like the give and take of small, discussion-oriented classes?

LOCATION: Do you find cities exciting or threatening? Do you see rural areas as providing opportunities for outdoor activities and sports and a close-knit community? Do you want access to a city without being in one? Think about your relationship with Washington, DC—do you take advantage of what the city has to offer? Do you need a city near you in order to thrive?
REGION: Would you like to spend four years of your life in a part of the country different from the one in which you have been raised and educated? Will it be the Northeast? South? Midwest? West? Abroad?

TYPE OF STUDY: Are you looking for a broad education in the liberal arts? Or do you know that you want a career in engineering? Medicine? Law? Business? Art? Is having the flexibility to move between programs important to you?

COST: While most private colleges cost in excess of $50,000 for one year's tuition, room and board, there are state universities that cost considerably less. There are a number of colleges with merit scholarship programs; keep in mind that these scholarships are highly competitive. If you are a DC resident, you may want to investigate colleges participating in the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program. When thinking about financial aid, you need to know which of your colleges guarantee that they meet 100% of demonstrated need, which of your colleges are need blind, and which of your colleges are need-aware.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: These might include the diversity of the student body, weather, academic requirements, study abroad opportunities, resources for students with learning differences, athletic facilities and programs, and musical or other extracurricular activities.

INVESTIGATING COLLEGES

Having asked yourself these questions in the context of your self-evaluation, you are now ready to begin researching colleges and universities. You have equipped yourself to recognize aspects of schools that do or do not meet your requirements. Your next question is: Where do I start?

Some of you will wait until you meet with your college counselor to start thinking about specific colleges. Others—through talking with friends, siblings, or parents—might have some positive feelings about certain institutions even before meeting with us. Whatever category you fall into, there are a number of ways to learn more about colleges.

First, as with any research project, you should be certain at the outset that you understand the terms with which you will be dealing. The following list explains the types of institutions and programs generally considered by St. Albans students:

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE: A four-year institution that emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. Pre-professional or professional training may be available, but these are not stressed.

UNIVERSITY: An academic institution that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and supports degree-granting professional schools that are not exclusively technological (such as medicine or journalism). Usually, a university is composed of a number of "schools" or "colleges," each of which encompasses a general field of study.

BUSINESS SCHOOL: Business schools fall into two categories. At some colleges it is possible to specialize in business administration in conjunction with supplementary liberal arts courses. Other institutions offer business courses primarily. Know that if you are looking at business programs, a strong math background (through Calculus) is usually necessary.

ENGINEERING OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE: Independent professional school that provides four-year training programs in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes. Know that if you are looking at engineering programs, a strong math and science background (through Calculus) is necessary. Before looking specifically at engineering colleges, you should thoroughly research the engineering field. You might want to consider a summer program in engineering in order to gain familiarity with the discipline.

MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMY: Military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Merchant Marines. These institutions (West Point, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy) require recommendations and a nomination by a U.S. senator or member of congress. Private and state-supported military institutions, however, operate on a college application basis, as does the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentrations in various aspects of military science.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL OR CONSERVATORY: Professional schools offer specialized study in areas such as art, music, drama, dance, photography, etc.
To gain further information, you can consult any of many readily available source books (also see Resources). The College Handbook (published by the College Board), The Insider’s Guide to Colleges, (published by the Yale Daily News), The Princeton Review’s Best 384 Colleges, the Fiske Guide to Colleges, Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges, and Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges are some of the many works available for purchase or in libraries. Copies of these and other guidebooks—as well as viewbooks and academic catalogues from individual colleges—are also in the College Office, where you may read them at your leisure. You should also visit college websites (usually www.collegename.edu). These are excellent sources of information, and you can use the sites to request printed materials or to email admissions counselors or current students with specific questions.

There are an infinite number of online college search engines that allow you to specify your interests and provide you with a list of schools that meet those criteria. Many of the resources above also have apps, which you can download (see Useful Websites). Be forewarned that many of these sites require you to register, which may result in your receiving a deluge of promotional email.

During your individual conferences with your college counselor, you will develop a tentative list of colleges. The list will reflect both your preferences and our suggestions based on your self-evaluation, our meetings with you, and your personal and academic record. By no means is this initial list the only group of colleges from which you may choose; over the next nine months, you and we will constantly revise your choices to reflect changes in your record and in your feelings about schools, based on your research and visiting. Once you have developed your initial list, you should make sure you are on all of your colleges’ email and mailing lists.

Most colleges will send you glossy, professionally produced viewbooks, which appear designed to convince you that students on their always-sunny campuses smile during all of their waking hours and never have a negative word to say about their intellectually stimulating and socially fulfilling school. After you have read several of these, you might begin to wonder what all the hubbub around finding "the right" college is all about, given that there seem to be so many that would be perfect for everyone!

You will have much more luck answering your most important academic questions about colleges if you can obtain their catalogues, which describe graduation requirements and course offerings in detail. Colleges may be reluctant to send these to prospective students, in their continuing efforts to reduce publication and mailing costs; however, most college catalogs are available online or you can obtain them during a campus visit. There are also many college catalogs on file in the College Office, which you are encouraged to peruse. With the catalogues, you can make meaningful and accurate comparisons among the academic opportunities at various colleges.

YOUR FINAL LIST

One of the questions asked most frequently is, "What should my final list of colleges include?" Inherent in this question are two considerations. First, how many schools should I apply to? And second, what ranges of admissions selectivity should these schools include?

As a general rule, your final application group should include eight to eleven colleges that vary in terms of selectivity but have the most important features that you desire. As long as you do not limit yourself geographically, finding such a group of schools is not a difficult task when we consider the large number of colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and abroad. Think about admissions selectivity in these terms: What percentage of applicants are offered admission? How do my grades and test scores compare with St. Albans students who have been admitted to these colleges in the past? The response to the first question can be found in a college guidebook. Your college counselor can help you find the answer to the second.

While colleges consider numerous subjective factors in the admissions process—such as essays, extracurricular accomplishments, and letters of recommendation—we encourage you, when placing your colleges into selectivity categories, to focus on the more concrete factors affecting admissions: your academic performance and standardized testing. Colleges publish the middle 50% range of testing for their admitted students. This will give you a general indication of how you compare with the strength of the applicant pool at that college. Your academic record will be the most important factor in your application. Highly selective colleges look for students who have challenged themselves in a rigorous program of study, and while they value a high level of achievement throughout high school, they also view positively students who have shown improvement.
We suggest that your final list include:

Reach Schools: These are schools where the chances of admission are not in your favor but you have some chance of admission. There is a real difference between a reach school and one where you have absolutely no chance of admission.

Middle Schools: You should have two or three schools where you are a truly viable candidate, with roughly a 50-50 chance of admission, in order to provide choice at the end of the process.

Foundation Schools: These schools are the foundation of your list. You need to have two schools where the odds of admission are strongly in your favor and where you will be happy and productive.

It is often easier for students to think of colleges in the reach category, but it is the other two categories to which you must direct your most thoughtful and major efforts if the application process is going to work for you. The student who is involved, informed, and realistic has no difficulty developing a balanced and focused list of colleges, which results in his having choices and positive feelings concerning the college admissions process. Remember that a college that is classified as a middle school for one student may be a reach for another, and that a reach school is not inherently better than a middle or foundation school. We will do our best to give you a realistic assessment of your chances of admission at the schools on your list based on historical data of St. Albans students and the admissions statistics of the specific colleges.

A Few Points of Caution

1. Many students spend hours deciding on their few top—usually “reach”—choices and five minutes selecting one or two safer, foundation institutions. We strongly advise that you spend as much time and consideration selecting your foundation schools as you do your reach schools; in fact, you should build your list from one or two foundation schools that you find first. Realistically, you may eventually matriculate at one of these most probable institutions. While it may not be as selective and prestigious as the top choice, you should be sure that it has what you are looking for and that it is a college that you stand a good chance of being happy and successful. If your top choices are small, selective liberal arts colleges, it does not make a great deal of sense to include a large, multi-dimensional university as a foundation choice. If you want a small, liberal arts college, you should spend the necessary time finding a similar type of school that will qualify as a foundation choice.

2. Many students feel that simply because a particular institution falls into the middle category as opposed to the reach category, that it does not offer programs of equal quality. Such an assumption is incorrect. The selectivity of any institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool, which, in turn, may be affected as much by geographic location, popularity, and reputation as by actual academic quality. Many schools, for a variety of reasons, may be middle or foundation schools from an admissions perspective yet offer programs equal in quality to those in the student’s “reach” category. Do not assume that admission selectivity = academic strength.

3. There are many excellent schools throughout the country, and we encourage you to investigate options beyond the East Coast. You might, for a variety of reasons, be considered a more unique and attractive candidate by a selective college in another part of the country than by a school equal in quality in the eastern United States.

4. While much has been made about the decline of male applicants in recent years, this is not necessarily the case at many of the institutions that St. Albans students identify as top choices. At most colleges, competition for admission remains keen, no matter the student's gender.

5. Many students and parents still feel that they can select any one of the various state universities as a foundation choice. Many state universities have become extremely competitive, both for in-state and out-of-state applicants. Some state universities have established quotas governing the number of out-of-state students admitted, thereby creating intense competition for a limited number of places.

6. Beware of publications that attempt to rank or compare schools based on “objective” criteria. All students must make their own personal decisions, and a magazine or guide cannot include your personal needs in their rankings. Colleges with high average SAT/ACT scores or low acceptance percentages are not necessarily the best for you, nor do they necessarily offer stronger academic programs than colleges with lower averages and percentages.
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<tr>
<th>St. Albans College Matriculation 2014-2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>American University</td>
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<td>Amherst College (9)</td>
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<td>Auburn University</td>
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<td>Babson College (3)</td>
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<td>Bates College (7)</td>
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<td>Birmingham-Southern College (2)</td>
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<td>Boston College (6)</td>
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<td>Boston University</td>
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<td>Bowdoin College (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brigham Young University</td>
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<td>University of British Columbia, Canada</td>
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<td>Brown University (9)</td>
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<td>University of California at Berkeley (7)</td>
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<td>University of California at Los Angeles</td>
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<td>Carleton College</td>
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<td>Carnegie Mellon University (3)</td>
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<td>Case Western Reserve University</td>
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<td>Catholic University of America</td>
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<td>College of Charleston</td>
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<td>University of Chicago (34)</td>
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<td>Claremont McKenna College (2)</td>
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Visiting Colleges

If you have the opportunity to visit colleges, take advantage of it! Visits accomplish a number of goals, the most important of which is to give you a “gut feeling” about the institutions, making the college/university research process “come to life.” It is important to try to see different types of colleges and settings in order to establish or confirm your preferences; thus, try to see big/small, city/rural, liberal arts/comprehensive colleges, etc. You may want to begin with several of the universities in DC; there are many types of colleges in this immediate area, and local visits may introduce you to a great college option or simply help you figure out some basic characteristics that you will seek in other colleges. A college that may seem “okay” while you are doing your initial research may feel “perfect” once you are walking around campus. Likewise, a college may seem perfect while reading about it, but when you visit, it might not feel right. Listen to your instincts and your emotional reactions—they will usually be right! Campus visits also provide the opportunity to meet with admissions people, faculty, and coaches who may be helpful in providing information now and assisting in the admission process later.

Please note that fifth formers are not excused from school for college visits or to meet with college representatives here at school. Many of you will begin visiting during Spring Break, but late August and early September before senior year can also be excellent times to see colleges in session, as many of them begin their first semester before St. Albans does. You may also visit schools during the fall of your senior year. As soon as it is available, review the St. Albans fall calendar with your parents and take advantage of any free days for visiting colleges. A Form VI student in good standing may miss a limited number of class days to visit colleges. He must make arrangements for this in consultation with his form dean, teachers, and college advisor.

Do not be overly concerned if you can only visit colleges when few or no students are on campus. Even a relatively empty campus can give you a feel for whether or not the school appeals to you. Further, you can always re-visit when the school is in session if you need to sharpen your impression. We strongly urge rising seniors to visit the bulk of the schools on their list before the start of their senior year. Think what a relief it would be, not to have to worry about which colleges you will apply to, during your busy senior year! Focus your list as carefully as you can during the summer, and the rest of the process will begin to fall into place.

To arrange visits, you (not your parents) should email/call the admissions office to find out what types of activities are available for prospective students. (Be careful of emails, as they may be forwarded into oblivion. Some colleges have online forms to schedule visits, and these are fine. Calling is the most direct way to arrange a visit.) Many colleges will ask you to make an appointment to visit. Chances are, the university will offer information sessions, campus tours and, possibly, personal interviews. Take advantage of everything that is offered. If you visit in the summer, there may not be many students around (but you will see LOTS of fellow visitors), so you will not necessarily see a completely true view of the school. Try to imagine what the school would feel like with students around. Be aware that a number of universities require alumni interviews of all applicants in their senior year and will only provide information sessions for students visiting campus. Two visits a day is doable and productive; more than two is exhausting!

Interviews are not as scary as the word implies. In most cases, your interview will be informational, not evaluative. This means that your interview will not affect your chances of admission unless you have a phenomenal interview (very possible) or a disastrous one (very rare). This is your chance to ask questions and to tell the university all about yourself. Be prepared to talk about yourself and your interests: this is the whole point. In preparation for your interview, think about three or four activities, personal accomplishments, character traits, or experiences that you would like to discuss. In an interview composed of open-ended questions (usually the case), you will have ample opportunity to talk about what you want. Make sure you ask several thoughtful questions at the end of the interview (these should be questions that cannot be answered by opening the university’s viewbook). Be prepared to explain WHY you are visiting the university, and never, ever say, “Oh, my parents are making me visit this school.” Your interviewer may be an admissions professional, a current student, or an alumna/us. If you are interviewing with anyone other than an admissions professional, keep in mind that your interviewer may not have the true inside scoop on the admissions process. Dress nicely (smart casual or school dress code) and ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS write a thank-you note to your interviewer.
**Group information sessions** can be extremely large or very small, depending on the school you are visiting, and the time of year. These formal presentations are usually given by an admissions officer and will be followed by a question-and-answer session. This is an opportunity to ask general questions, not questions specific to your case. Try not to judge a university by the quality of the presentation or the strength of the presenter—university admissions people have bad days just like the rest of us (especially in the summer, when they may be giving three or four talks a day). Take the information for what it is, and talk to other people on campus (students, professors) to confirm/refute your impressions. Don’t panic when you hear admissions officers talk about the need to take five or six AP classes in your senior year (it’s impossible to do this here!); remember that the advice admissions officers are giving is general, and when it comes time, they will evaluate you within the context of St. Albans.

**Campus tours** are usually led by current students. This is your opportunity to ask in-depth questions about student life. You will find that students are both very loyal to their university AND very honest.

While visiting colleges and universities, **DO:**

- Make sure that you fill in an information card from the admissions office. Even if you are just wandering around campus on your own, fill in a card so that admissions knows you were there. If the admission office is closed, write your name and address on a piece of paper and slip it under the admissions office door. Later on, when universities are trying to figure out whether your interest in the school is sincere, records of contacts/visits are very important.
- Try to schedule appointments with faculty members in areas of interest or with coaches. The more information, the better! (Summertime is difficult in this respect, as many professors and coaches are on vacation—but try anyway!) If you can’t find someone while you are on campus, ask admissions for names or emails and get in contact later.
- Visit classes if school is in session. (Don’t be embarrassed or self-conscious; college courses are visited by prospective students every day!)
- Consider a “stealth visit”—sit on a bench, in a cafeteria, in a quad, or in the library and just watch and listen.
- Approach current students on campus and ask them questions. You will be surprised at how willing they will be to talk to you!
- Make a point of seeking out recent St. Albans graduates attending the institutions you are visiting (we can help you find names of STA alums attending your schools of interest). But also try to talk to students you don’t know.
- Eat in the dining room and visit the dorms, library, student center, and athletic facilities.
- Think about the places on a campus where you are most likely to spend lots of time, and make sure you see these places on every campus.
- Pick up a current student newspaper to find out the real issues on campus.
- Take a notebook and write down your initial impressions/reactions as you drive away from campus. This will be very helpful later!
- Take pictures.
- Ask for a business card from every official person you speak with. Send thank-you notes and follow-up emails.

**COLLEGES VISITING OUR LOCAL AREA**

In the spring, juniors are encouraged to attend the annual **Washington Area Independent Schools College Fair.** This year, this event will be held on the evening of **Wednesday, April 10.** College representatives from approximately 200 colleges and universities attend the fair. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about schools from all over the United States and Canada, as well as other universities abroad.

**IMPORTANT:** When you walk into the fair, you will see an endless stream of tables with college representatives. Have an agenda for your time at the fair. Make a point of introducing yourself to the colleges in which you are interested, but make sure to learn about colleges you don’t know much about. Have some questions ready. Every time you stop by a table, the college representative will ask you to fill in an information card. **You can save time by pre-printing labels that include: your name, full address, email address, high school, high school code (090165), high school graduation year, SAT, ACT or PSAT scores (if you know them), and area of academic interest.**
Students have additional opportunities to learn about colleges in the fall of senior year, when approximately 150 college representatives come to St. Albans to meet with interested seniors. The schedule of visitors is posted on the College Office bulletin board and your OnCampus College Advisory group page, and students may sign up to meet with a college representative. Students should not neglect their coursework or important classes to attend these meetings, and you must ask your teacher’s permission before missing a class. If you or your teacher feel you should not miss a class, we are always happy to tell a representative that you are interested but cannot attend the information session.

There also will be two college mini-fairs held at STA during the school day.

Many colleges host information sessions in the Washington area during the fall. When we are notified of these, we will post information on the bulletin board.

**COLLEGE INTERVIEWS: TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

I. WHY DO COLLEGES INTERVIEW?

The personal interview is an often “strongly recommended” or “required” part of the university application process. Generally, interviews are mostly informational, which means that the focus of your conversation is an information exchange: you learn about the school, the school learns about you. Rarely will an informational interview sway an admissions decision, as these informal talks usually reinforce other aspects of your application. Interviews will be conducted by admissions counselors, student interviewers, or alumni representatives. Mostly, interviews provide the university with a chance to put a face to a stack of paper. There will be a write-up of your interview placed in your file. Not all universities offer interviews, but if they do, you should take advantage of the opportunity. Read the fine print to guide you about when your interview should take place. Many universities that interview will allow you to interview before you apply; some will require that your application be submitted before an interview takes place (this applies mostly to very competitive US universities that use local alumni to interview).

An evaluative interview is a different story. Interviews for special summer programs, scholarship programs, and some university admissions interviews are evaluative. In these cases, the topic of your conversation may feel more academic and specific.

II. WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS SHOULD I BE PREPARED TO ANSWER?

Open-ended questions, such as: Tell me about your high school and the courses you have been taking; What has been your favorite class?; What do you think you want to study in college?; What kinds of things have you been involved in outside of class?; What are your goals for your senior year?; What other colleges are you applying to?; What’s the most interesting book you have read recently?

III. HOW SHOULD I ANSWER?

Honestly. Go into your interview prepared to discuss three or four aspects of your life—academics, personal experiences, extracurricular achievements, how you’ve changed in your time at St. Albans, etc. You want to convey important qualities that distinguish you. Work these into the conversation when appropriate. Expect to talk! This may sound obvious, but you would be surprised at how many interviews turn disastrous when the interviewee responds to questions in one-word answers. Elaborate! Engage in the discussion. Your interview should feel like a conversation, not an interrogation. Be yourself!

IV. RANDOM TIPS

- Dress nicely (smart casual at the very least)! First impressions are important. You will notice that other students waiting for interviews are casually dressed. If you are more formally dressed, you will stand out. Make sure that your handshake is firm, that you look your interviewer in the eye, that you smile, and that you are energetic and interested.

- Do not answer questions with one-word answers. There should be lots of give and take in your interview.

- Be prepared. Bring a copy of your transcript, if you wish. You do not need to do this, but if you want to remind yourself of your preparation, discuss academic highlights, or explain low points, this may be appropriate. Do not bring a portfolio of attendance certificates or eighth-grade achievement awards.
• Don’t fidget. If you are flailing your limbs around or constantly shifting in your chair, your interviewer will be distracted. Make sure the focus of your interview is what you are saying, not what you are doing.

• Don’t chew gum or bring any props that can be accidentally propelled. (In one real interview, an interviewee mistakenly launched her pen at her interviewer, who happened to be Ms. Magaziner Mills. Beware of injuring your interviewer!)

• Plan to be about 15 minutes early for your interview. This gives you some time to get lost!

• When you walk into an admissions office, take control! It is YOU who is interviewing, not your mom or dad. Act accordingly.

• Have several questions ready to ask. These shouldn’t be “yes” or “no” questions…they should be questions that show that you have already researched the school. Do not ask, “How many students go here?” You can find that information in a university viewbook. Instead, ask: “What are the most popular study abroad programs?” or “I’m really interested in your interdisciplinary international relations major. Would I be able to study international relations and still take biology?” or “How would you describe the student body here?”

• If you are interviewing with an alumnus or a student interviewer, take some comments with a grain of salt. Only admissions officers will be making admissions decisions. Alumni and students will write an interview report, but they will rarely have a final say in your candidacy. Most alumni and student interviewers are fantastic, and you should use your time with them to learn their valuable view of their campus. Every once in a while, you may encounter someone who inaccurately represents their school. They may not know detailed answers to specific questions. Consider how long it has been since an alumnus has graduated—he/she might not be able to speak first-hand of current campus facilities, programs, or admissions standards. If you feel that you had anything other than a positive experience at your interview, let your college advisor know.

• Make sure you ask for your interviewer’s business card. This will come in handy later!

• Make sure you write a thank-you note to your interviewer shortly after you have talked.

• Most of all, relax and be yourself. Remember that while your interviewer is trying to decide whether you are a good match for his/her school, you are also trying to decide whether the school is a good match for you!

P.S. Expect university admissions offices to be crowded! Summer is a busy time, so if the admissions office is packed, take a deep breath and plow through the crowds.
THE APPLICATION PROCESS

St. Albans School
Completing the Application

The application is your opportunity to speak for yourself. Be careful and deliberate as you fill in these forms. Some tips as you begin:

- Carefully read the directions and questions. You would be surprised to know how many students never look at the directions page. Read the directions!

- Use your **official name** (no nicknames) on your application, and make sure your name is on everything that you will submit. Be consistent with the format of your name on every section, including any necessary forms that you give to your teachers and college counselor. If the version of your name on your applications is different from the version of your name you’ve given to the College Board or ACT, you may have some logistical problems getting all the pieces of your application into the same folder. If you think about how many documents are handled by a large admissions office, you will realize how difficult it is for all of the parts of your application to make their way to the same place.

- More than 800 colleges accept the Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)). Approximately 140 colleges accept the Coalition Application ([www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org)). Both are completed online. Many colleges that subscribe to the Common or Coalition Application will also require you to complete a supplement to the application—these may include additional essays. Some colleges require you to use their own application.

- Write a list of all of your extracurricular activities and the year(s) in which you did them. This will make filling out your forms much easier!

- Ideally, you should plan on completing all of your applications before the Winter Break to ensure a nice, relaxing holiday (even if you have made ED/EA applications!). You should certainly make sure that all of your applications are completed by the end of the break, even if some are due later than that. Trust us, you do not want to have applications hanging over your head when you return to school in January—exams should have your full attention then. You may need large blocks of time, which rarely occur during the academic terms, in which you do not feel distracted by homework, exams, athletics, etc.—so that you can do a good job on your applications.

- If ever filling in paper forms, always use dark black ink.

- Treat any electronic form as a paper form. In other words—proofread! Print off copies and look over everything with a close and careful eye. It is easy to hit “submit”; make sure that you do not press that button without being ready.

- **DO YOUR APPLICATIONS YOURSELF.** Colleges are not impressed by slick, perfect masterpieces prepared by someone else. Believe us, colleges know the difference between the work of a teenage boy and the work of a parent or a professional.

- Be sure to answer all questions fully, specifically and thoughtfully. A short essay that asks about an academic, extracurricular, or vocational interest is looking to find out more about YOU. On longer essays, make sure you leave enough time to write the number of drafts and revisions necessary to produce a final copy that pleases you.

- Be sure to represent fully, and accurately, your extracurricular activities. Rack your brain to remember everything meaningful that you have been involved in high school. This will be the “official” record of your interests and accomplishments in sports, the arts, social service, employment, etc. Remember that the activity does not have to be a school-sponsored one. Colleges use this list to get an idea of what you like to do when you have spare time.

- **PROOFREAD.** Check to see that you have followed directions, answered all of the questions, and checked all possible grammar and spelling errors. While no one else can write your application for you, we urge you to have another set of eyes (parent, teacher, college counselor) look over your work. Sometimes it is difficult to catch your own errors.

- Make sure you keep a copy of all of your applications and essays in case the original is lost.
The Essay

The essay represents the most time-consuming, but arguably one of the most important, parts of the application. In your essay, you are able to speak in your voice and highlight what you would like to say about your life so far.

It’s difficult to define, in any narrow sense, what makes a “good essay,” but every successful essay shares a few things in common. First, the essay should show fluent writing, demonstrating good technical control of language. Colleges are concerned about the writing proficiency of their students, and you can strengthen your candidacy by showing strong writing skills. Second, the essay should reveal an honest and thoughtful portrayal of yourself—your essay should be very YOU. One of our most common comments on essay drafts is: “there needs to be more of YOU in here.”

Depending on the questions asked in the application, an essay can also highlight academic strengths, any uniqueness in your background or experiences, or the contributions that you can make to a college. Colleges seek students who have different perspectives; those who will be able to make an impact on their campuses and in their classrooms. They want students who possess genuine intellectual interests and who are willing to give of themselves out of concern for others.

Be prepared to “toot your own horn.” This is an uncomfortable prospect for most of us—for all of our lives, we are told to be modest, and now we are telling you to brag! Be proud of your accomplishments (not arrogant) and be expressive about them in your writing.

Using Your Essays to Enhance Your Applications

“When everything else is engraved in stone, the essay is Silly Putty.”

This quote from a college admissions dean sums it up well. Your grades, your SAT/ACTs, and your extracurricular activities for the most part reflect your past accomplishments. But the essay is now! The essay and short answer sections of your college applications are, in fact, the only portions of your applications over which you still have complete control. This is your chance to speak directly to the college admissions office and tell them what you most want them to know about yourself. You will find that most essay questions are rather open-ended; you will have great flexibility to express yourself the way you want to.

Following are some Dos and Don’ts collected from various college admissions deans and many years of experience. Remember that the best essays come with a great deal of self-reflection!

Allow yourself some thinking time. Deciding what to write about is often the most difficult part. Many of you will look at that infamous “describe a significant experience” question and think: but nothing significant has happened to me yet! This is not true—it’s all about perspective.

- Start by brainstorming. Jot down some ideas.
- Think about what activities you’ve been engaged in over time, and why they’ve been meaningful to you. Why have you chosen to pursue the activities you’ve pursued? There is something unique inside of you that has pushed you to travel abroad, become a student leader, volunteer more hours of community service than required, etc.—what is it?
- Think of something that you had to struggle to achieve. What was that accomplishment? How did you tackle it? How did it change you?
- Think about a trip you’ve taken or an experience that has been memorable. Are you a different person now, having completed the trip or experience, than you would have been had you not done it? Make sure you avoid simply retelling your trip’s itinerary. Make sure this is about you and how you responded to your trip.
- What personality traits are you most proud of? Choose a few and jot down examples of how they have shaped your life.
- Think of something that you have heard again and again around your home. How has this shaped your life?
- When you look back on your high school years, what are your most memorable moments? Why are these so memorable?
- What person has influenced you the most? How?
• Write a list of all essay questions you will need to answer and look at them before you go to sleep every night. Keep them in the back of your mind. You may find yourself inspired!

• Try a free-form outline listing everything you might want to say about a topic.

• Talk out possible topics with friends and parents. When they think of you, what do they think of?

• Tell a story only you can tell. Write from your own personal perspective. It is fine to write about a “common” topic—the influence of athletics, a favorite teacher, your first experience on stage, etc.—just be sure to include specific details from your own experience so that your essay stands out from the “common” ones.

• SHOW, DON’T TELL. Compare these two short statements: which one makes you want to read on? A) I have always wanted to study law because it is an interesting, important and significant field that is of interest to me both now and in the future. B) Ever since I won the Moot Court in seventh grade, I’ve wanted to study law. Four years of summer work for our local judge has heightened this interest.

• Good writing does not happen in one draft. Don’t begin your essay the day it needs to be submitted!

• Ask someone whose opinion you respect to read your draft and tell you what they think you are saying and how you are coming across. They should tell you that they would recognize your essay as yours without knowing that you wrote it.

• Read over your essay carefully. Be alert for ways you can add more detail and cut repetitive phrases.

• Keep your audience in mind. Remember that you are introducing yourself to a college (not a roommate, psychiatrist, or True Confessions magazine). Colleges want to know 1) your intellectual and creative interests 2) your personal strengths 3) how well you write 4) what is special about you. Aim to write essays that provide positive but realistic insights into all of these areas.

• If you are funny, be funny. If you are not funny, do not try to be funny!

• Don’t repeat what is included in other parts of the application by making your essay a second resume.

• Remember that colleges are not interested in a plot line of your favorite novel, the syllabus of your favorite course, a running commentary of your hockey team’s wins, or a treatise on the formula for solving world hunger. They want to know about YOU: how you think and what you feel.

• Rise to the challenge of the questions by making your essays uniquely your own: communicate your thoughts, ideas and feelings through your writing. Show that you are willing to think and reflect. Consider the essay portions of your applications as opportunities to express yourself and provide colleges with a dimension of your personality they won’t get from test scores, grades, teacher recommendations, or lists of activities.

• This is not an academic essay. If you are creative, be creative with your organization.

• There is no precise formula for a “perfect” essay. Write (and rewrite!) with energy and sensitivity; like what you are writing; be concise and organized. Your essays will be read carefully. Write them well!

The following essay questions have been used by colleges recently…

➢ Evaluate a significant achievement, experience, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.

➢ Discuss some issue of personal, local, national or international concern and its importance to you.

➢ Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
➢ Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.

➢ A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.

➢ Topic of your choice!

➢ Write page 217 of your 300-page biography.

➢ Why do you want to attend X University?

➢ The modern world has lost all its heroes. Do you agree or disagree?

➢ If you could select one item to represent yourself, what would it be?

➢ Write a letter to your college roommate.

➢ Select a photograph that means something to you and tell us why you have selected it.

➢ If you were to describe yourself with a quotation, what would the quote be? Explain your answer.

➢ If you were to spend an evening with anybody, real or fictional, deceased or living, whom would it be and why?

Extracurricular Activities

There is no “right” collection of extracurricular activities. Colleges want to know what you do on your own time because they are trying to understand you. Selective colleges are not necessarily looking for a lengthy list of activities, but they are looking for the quality and depth of involvement in the activities you have chosen.

BE TRUE TO YOURSELF. This may seem obvious, but trying to “package” yourself in a certain way to impress your colleges will likely not work to your advantage. Often students hear from peers, parents, or hired consultants that admissions officers want to see certain character traits or inclinations. They then assume that they should undertake an activity or say something in their application that conveys the desired impression. Don’t do anything because “it will look good on my college application”; do things you want because you want to do them.

Someone reading your application will form an impression of you from many sources, so a single activity or statement is not likely to accomplish much without further details to reinforce it. Make sure that you do list the activities that have been important to you. Don’t forget your true free-time pursuits—if you play the guitar on your own time or read a new novel every week, make sure you include these things in your activities list as well.
SAMPLE ACTIVITIES RESUME

Samuel Stalbans
12345 Diagonal State Street
Washington, DC 20016
sstalbans@stalbansschool.org

Education

- St. Albans School, Washington DC (grades 4-12). Headmaster's List (grades 9-10).

Leadership

- Debate Club Founder (grades 9-12): Selected topics for discussion of 12-member group. Instituted annual "Debate Day" in school.
- Varsity Baseball Team Captain (grade 12): Elected by teammates and coaches.
- Dorm Prefect (grades 11-12): Assisted the faculty dorm masters. Organized activities for boarding students.

Athletics

- Varsity Baseball (grades 9-12): First Baseman on league championship team.
- JV Basketball (grades 11-12): Point Guard.

Community Service

- XYZ Hospital (grades 10-11): Volunteered 120 hours in emergency room.
- American Red Cross (grade 10): Worked with annual phonathon during the summer.
- Race for the Cure (grade 11): Raised $1,000 for breast cancer research by running a half-marathon.

Activities

- Government Club (grades 11-12): Participated in weekly meetings; debated current event topics.
- Jackets Off (grade 12): Tenor in a cappella vocal group.
- St. Albans News (grade 11): Writer and Contributing Editor for school newspaper.
- Peer Tutor (grades 9-11): Worked with students struggling in French and math.
- Guitar (grades 9-12): Self-taught bass guitarist.

Tips for writing an activities resume:

- Always fill in the activities box on your college applications. If you feel as though your activities “do not fit” into the box, you may want to include a one-page listing of your activities/awards.
- Include only activities from your high school years, unless you have had a nationally recognized experience that is especially significant.
- In general, include your involvement in school-organized activities, community/volunteer activities, work experience, and any specific awards you have won.
- One page should be sufficient, unless you are nationally or internationally recognized for your achievements. Do not write in paragraph form: one line is generally enough for each item.
- Do not include photocopies of award certificates or letters. Simply list those awards and honors. Admissions offices do not want to receive files that are several inches thick.
- Rack your brain to come up with all of your significant involvements throughout high school. List those activities/commitments that have meant something to you, even if you did not participate for extended periods of time.
- If you have a particular talent—performing arts, athletics, etc.—you may want to devote an entire resume to your involvements in that area.
Recommendations

Colleges vary in the number of teacher recommendations they require; many ask for two. You should be prepared by late spring of your junior year (early September of your senior year at the very latest!) to request recommendations from two teachers who have taught you in the Fifth or Sixth Form. If you are applying early, you may not want to ask a senior year teacher, unless that person has taught you previously. While you may feel most comfortable with a teacher from Third of Fourth Form, we advise that you choose someone who has taught you more recently. In fact, some colleges require that teacher recommendations be written by junior or senior year teachers. The required recommendations must come from academic subject teachers (English, math, science, social studies, or foreign language). If you wish to ask another adult who knows you well but has not taught you in one of these major subject areas (music, art, coach), this letter should be considered a supplementary recommendation.

There is an old admissions office saying: “the thicker the file, the thicker the kid.” In general, you should not exceed the required number of recommendations. If you decide to ask for an additional letter, we advise you to limit any extras to one.

You should provide your chosen teachers with a recommendation request form (provided by the College Office) and inform them of your EARLIEST APPLICATION DEADLINE as soon as you know it.

Secondary School Report

Every college application will include a Secondary School Report (sometimes called the Counselor Report). For most colleges, we will complete the report online and send it electronically along with your transcript and school letter of recommendation. With each application, we also send a copy of the School Profile, a document that includes school information and a description of St. Albans’ course requirements and grading scale.

The school letter of recommendation will be written by your college counselor and will provide an overview of your academic and extracurricular record at STA. In writing these letters, we rely on teacher comments that have been sent home and the questionnaires that you and your parents have completed for us. We count on each student to inform us of any activities or specific interests of which we might not be aware. In these letters, we strive to present you in the most favorable light possible, highlighting your strengths and underscoring the contributions you have made to St. Albans and the greater community.

GPA: Your St. Albans academic transcript provides a grade-point-average for each of Forms III, IV, and V, as well as a cumulative GPA for all three years. The GPA is calculated on a 100-point scale. The school does not convert or provide GPA on a 4.0 scale. If a coach or scholarship application is asking you to provide a GPA on a 4.0 scale, you can configure your approximate GPA here: https://pages.collegeboard.org/how-to-convert-gpa-4.0-scale.

Your final college list must be in the college office by December 6 of your senior year. For your own planning purposes, it is important that you have refined and defined a fairly definitive college list by this time. Due to the large amount of documents that must be submitted, and since school is closed over Christmas break, we cannot guarantee that requests received later than December 6 can be fulfilled in time for the early January deadlines.

This deadline also applies to students who made early applications, as well as those who are making only Regular Decision applications. ED/EA colleges do not notify students until just before Christmas break, so it is essential that all students have a “backup plan” in the event they are deferred or denied early.

Sometimes colleges will send you a notice or post a message on your website account that some part of your application is missing. If this occurs just after the college’s application deadline, this usually means that the college has not yet finished processing the mail/online submissions. Don’t panic. If forms from the College Office or teachers are missing, let us know. Forms can always be re-sent, emailed, or faxed—this is a very common occurrence.

Reporting Disciplinary Actions to Colleges

Most colleges will ask whether a student has been suspended or placed on probation. If this applies to you, it is important that you and your counselor discuss your suspension or probation to be clear on what occurred and the lessons you have learned from the experience. When asked, we report suspensions and probations that happen during a student’s Upper School years. If your academic or personal record changes after you file your applications, we are obligated to report these changes to your colleges, and we will do so within several weeks of the infraction. When your part of the application asks whether you have been suspended or placed on probation, you must answer truthfully and candidly and explain the circumstances and the positive impact the disciplinary action had on you.
Standardized Test Scores

Please note that it is your responsibility to report your SAT/ACT scores to colleges. Some allow you to self-report the scores on the application, while others require you to send them officially (directly, electronically) from the College Board/ACT to the college. Your scores do not appear on your transcript. When you register for the SAT or ACT, be sure to include the St. Albans school code (090165) on your registration.

Types of Applications

**EARLY ACTION / EARLY DECISION**

Many colleges and universities offer an early application plan that allows a senior to apply by November 1 or 15 and receive a decision by mid-December. The following plans are options:

**Early Decision** is a binding plan through which the student agrees to matriculate at that college if offered admission. You can apply Early Decision to one school only. Some colleges also offer an Early Decision II plan, which is also binding but has an application deadline in January. ED II applicants are usually notified of their decisions in late February.

**Early Action** is offered by several colleges, including University of Virginia, Georgetown, Boston College, University of Chicago, and Tulane. This is a non-binding program, and students accepted under this plan have until the May 1 common reply date to make a final decision about matriculation.

**Single Choice Early Action, or Restrictive Early Action** is offered by colleges such as Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale. Under these plans, unlike other Early Action plans, the colleges stipulate that the applicant can apply early to only their institution. There are some exceptions; typically students can also apply early to public colleges/universities whose admission is non-binding or to colleges outside of the US. SCEA or REA plans are not binding, and students have until May 1 to make a final decision.

Applying early can be a wise choice for students who have visited a number of colleges and have come to the conclusion that a particular college is the one they clearly want to attend. These early options remove the element of uncertainty for a successful applicant, which tends to make the senior year a somewhat less anxious time. If, in the fall of your senior year, you are interested in applying Early Decision or Early Action, we must discuss your individual situation. In some cases, an early application can work to your advantage. However, some early candidates are deferred for consideration during regular admissions, and at many colleges, only a small number of them eventually gain admission. Further, many colleges deny some of their early candidates outright if they feel that a student is not a viable candidate. If your application will be strengthened by your first semester senior grades, it may be advisable to file all of your applications under the Regular Decision plan. You may also want to apply Regular Decision if financial aid is a consideration. Thus, students should not assume that applying early will give them an advantage—in fact, in some cases it could work to their disadvantage. While statistically it may appear that the odds of admission are more favorable early, you should be aware that the early pools generally are made up of a college’s most extraordinary applicants.

We assume that applying Single Choice Early Action indicates your strong desire to attend that college and that, if you are admitted, additional applications will probably not be necessary.

There are three possible outcomes to an Early Action/Early Decision application: you can be accepted, denied, or deferred to the regular decision pool.

**If you are deferred by your Early Decision/Early Action school, you should:**

- Make your other applications a top priority.
- Discuss with your college counselor what you might do to strengthen your candidacy at your early school.
- Keep working hard in all of your classes.
- Continue to take a strong academic program in the spring semester.
- Consider asking a teacher (ideally one from senior year) who did not write for you initially to add an additional recommendation to your early admissions file. This is certainly not a requirement, and you should talk this over with your college counselor before deciding.
- Write a letter to the college where you were deferred, expressing your continued interest and providing any updated information about your activities, both academic and extracurricular.
The College Office will:

- Send your first semester grades to your early college (as well as to all the others on your list) as soon as they are available.
- Contact our admissions representative at your early application college to see if there is any specific additional information that would be helpful as they review your credentials again.

PRIOITY DEADLINES

A number of universities have institutional priority deadlines. One of these is the University of Maryland, which has a regular deadline of January 20 but also states a priority deadline of November 1. Our recent experience with applicants to schools with priority deadlines indicates that all students should ensure that their materials are submitted by that priority deadline. Consider the priority deadline to be the actual deadline!

ROLLING ADMISSION

Colleges with rolling admission make decisions on applications as they are received. Some, but not all, state universities have rolling admission. Therefore, the sooner you submit your application to a college with rolling admission, the sooner you will receive an answer. Furthermore, as one rolling college states on its application: “Maximize your chances: apply early! Don’t wait until the deadline! Applications to all schools and colleges are considered on the basis of available space, so the earlier you apply, the greater chance you have of getting in.” We strongly recommend that you submit applications to schools with rolling admission as early in the fall as possible and certainly by October 15.

How Colleges Make Decisions

Happily, the admissions process generally works equitably. While we wish that every college would accept every St. Albans student who applies, we also feel confident that each year most colleges make rational and understandable decisions about the pool of St. Albans candidates. Nevertheless, much of the admissions anxiety and confusion surrounding college admissions stems from the sense of students and parents that admissions decisions are at best unfathomable, at worst arbitrary, and perhaps completely driven by numbers or special interests. This section of the handbook will attempt to de-mystify the manner in which colleges judge your candidacy.

Generally speaking, college selection committees will evaluate the following factors about you:

**Academic Performance:** Your record over four years of secondary school is most important. Achievement which reflects genuine effort, intellectual ability, and an interest in learning is key. And, of course, selective colleges are vitally interested in the courses you have selected, fully expecting a heavy concentration in English, math, science, foreign language, and history, as well as in the areas that St. Albans requires for graduation. You should take a course of study that is the most challenging that you can manage. You should be aware that various colleges have different admissions requirements. We will encourage you to review your senior year course selections with us in the spring.

**Standardized Testing:** Most colleges evaluate the SAT/ACT as part of each student's academic profile. At the most selective colleges, these tests can be a significant factor in the admissions process. Regarding SAT Subject Tests, colleges have differing policies. Some require them, some recommend them, and some do not ask for them at all. For colleges that ask for Subject Tests, you are likely to need two; Georgetown strongly recommends three. Some of you already have one or more SAT Subject Test results that you will use, and we will advise you on which additional Subject Tests to take.

**Teacher Recommendations and the Counselor's Recommendation:** Colleges are especially interested in what the faculty and we have to say about your academic and personal record. Teachers write primarily about your performance in a particular course, though they will often comment as well on your extracurricular activities and personal qualities since they often know you in the dormitory or in an activity. Your college advisor's letter is an overall assessment of your time at St. Albans, bringing together the many different threads of your life in as positive a portrayal as possible. Clearly, recommendation letters go a long way toward helping to characterize your effort and attitude in all areas of your life.
Since many colleges require two teacher recommendations, in late spring of junior year (September of your senior year at the latest!) you should ask two teachers to write for you. Choose teachers who know you well, preferably ones who taught you in junior or senior year, and who represent two different academic disciplines. The primary purpose of teacher recommendations is to present information about your academic accomplishments and intellectual attributes, as well as how you interact with your peers and teachers in a classroom setting. While an art or music teacher, coach, job supervisor, or Boy Scout leader may have many positive remarks to make about you, recommendations from these areas should be considered as supplementary.

Most successful applicants are admitted by submitting only the required materials; however, if there are one or two individuals who know you well and could provide helpful information about you that will not appear elsewhere, you may wish to ask them to write for you.

**Extracurricular Activities:** For most of you, your extracurricular and summer activities will not make a critical difference in college admissions, but rather will allow a college to see what interests you, how well you work with others, how productively you use your free time, and how much you challenge yourself in new ways. In other words, are you the type of person who will involve himself responsibly and productively in college and take advantage of the opportunities available? This is an important question in college admissions offices.

If you are an outstanding musician, athlete, or artist who will make a difference in a college's program, or have expertise or commitment in some other area, you might stand out from the applicant pool at that college. The vital factor here is how the college sees you performing as an undergraduate. For example, while you may be an outstanding soccer player at St. Albans, your skill will make a difference in the admissions process only if a particular college soccer coach thinks you can contribute to his team.

**Personal Qualities:** Colleges want to know if you can bring special personal qualities to the freshman class and whether you are essentially an honest, responsible, and thoughtful individual who has shown genuine concern for your own progress and for your peers. Are you a leader? Have you taken initiative in any activities? Have you demonstrated an interest in those less fortunate? Your own application and the recommendations will reveal these qualities, as will the personal interview (if the college offers one) or alumni interview.

While college admissions officers use the aforementioned criteria to make decisions that are sensitive and humane, you should understand that their professional loyalty lies with their own institution and the various constituencies within it. Thus, they seek not only the best and brightest scholars, but also the most talented artists and athletes, a balanced population geographically and ethnically, and a representation of alumni children. For these reasons, colleges may give preferential treatment in their admissions decisions to candidates who possess certain talents or who come from certain families or backgrounds. What this means is that the process may not always seem fair, and you might feel that someone else—whose academic credentials appear weaker than yours—gains admission to a school at which you are denied.

Remember that highly selective colleges deny far more qualified candidates than they accept. Thus, even if you have strong credentials in all of the above categories, you will not necessarily be offered admission by all of the colleges to which you apply. As the previous sections of this booklet have emphasized, however, if you have done the best you can at St. Albans and approach the college selection process with a healthy blend of care, flexibility, and realism, you will find many attractive college options within your grasp.

**AFTER THE DECISIONS: YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

Once you have received decisions from each college to which you applied, you should inform your college counselor and Ms. Stratton of the results. You should submit your deposit to the college you wish to attend in a timely manner, but no later than May 1, and then promptly write a letter to any other college to which you have been accepted, gracefully declining the offer of admission. Once you have accepted an offer of admission, it is considerate to inform those who wrote your recommendations of where you will be enrolling.

If you are placed on a waiting list by a college, you should let your college counselor know whether or not you are interested in pursuing admission from the waitlist. Your counselor will advise you on the steps you should take regarding a waitlist school you wish to attend.
The Role of Parents

It is natural for parents to feel as much, or more, anxiety than their child during the college selection process. Many find the process bewildering, either because it is their first time through it or because the nature of college admissions has changed dramatically since they were in high school. Others find that they cannot shake the feeling that their success as parents might be determined by whether their son gains admission to a certain college or group of colleges. Further, most parents have conflicting feelings about the process because their child is taking a large step toward independence from home and family. Add the fact that most parents try to keep their anxieties to themselves so as not to put unnecessary pressure on their child, and you can see why parents might also prefer that Precalculus midterm to the prospect of facing the college selection process.

Although we believe strongly that a student must feel certain that he owns the choice of where to attend college, we also believe that parents have an important role to play in the selection process. Specifically, they can help their son most by expressing clear support and understanding at each step of the process. This does not mean that parents should never express to their children their honest reactions to certain colleges or their opinions about whether or not other colleges would be a good match. It is critical, however, that such statements be balanced by a willingness to explore with the student the pros and cons of the colleges under consideration.

Who could serve as a more effective sounding board for a high school junior or senior than a non-judgmental parent? Who is better positioned to help with college visits, to proofread applications, and to work collaboratively with the student and the St. Albans college counselor on behalf of the student? For all these reasons, we engage parents in the college process through mailings, personal appointments, phone calls, and on-campus programs. These activities complement St. Albans’ inclusion of parents in many areas of their sons’ lives at the school.

Standardized Testing

The SAT or ACT is required by most competitive colleges and is meant to provide a reliable indication of a student’s ability to do college work. Most St. Albans students sit for the test(s) in the spring of the Fifth Form year and maybe again in the fall of the Sixth Form year.

College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB or College Board)
The College Board is a national nonprofit membership association dedicated to preparing, inspiring, and connecting students to college and opportunity. Among its best-known programs are the SAT, the PSAT, and the Advanced Placement Program. Through its testing division, the College Board administers standardized tests and reports test scores to colleges and universities. The College Board website (www.collegeboard.org) contains information on testing, financial aid, choosing a college, and SAT preparation and registration. Bulletins describing the testing programs are also available from the College Office or from Dr. Jarad Schofer, St. Albans testing coordinator.

PSAT/NMSQT - Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test
Administered in October of the Fifth Form year, this two-hour+ test provides students with the opportunity to prepare for the SAT, to enter the National Merit Scholarship competition, and to participate in the Student Search Service. The search service gives colleges mailing lists of students who have agreed to share their contact information. Colleges and universities pay the College Board for names of students who fall into certain categories selected by the individual colleges. These categories include test score ranges, ethnicity, GPA, and geographic location, among others.

The National Merit Scholarship Program uses the PSAT to screen those eleventh grade students of exceptional test-taking ability who may qualify for one of its scholarships. Students who score at or above the qualifying selection index score are named National Merit Semi-Finalists in the fall of their senior year. This cut-off is calculated in proportion to the number of graduating seniors in the District of Columbia and will vary slightly each year. For example, in the 2019 competition, the qualifying selection index score for DC was 223.

SAT
The SAT is a three-hour test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning ability, plus an optional 50-minute essay. The scoring is on a 1600-point scale with two sections in Evidence-Based Reading/Writing and Math, plus the essay. If you are taking the SAT, you should take the SAT with Essay at least once.

ACT - American College Testing Program
The ACT is a 2-hour and 55-minute test scored out of a possible 36 points, with four subsections in English, Math, Reading, and Science, plus an optional 40-minute essay. Scores are given in the four separate areas, as well as a composite score that averages the tests. The ACT is viewed and accepted by colleges equally with the SAT. If you are taking the ACT, you should take the ACT with Writing at least once.
SAT Subject Tests
These tests measure a student’s general level of achievement in a particular area of study. They are one hour long, and you may take up to three different tests on any one test date. Like the SAT sections, the scores range from 200 to 800.

Colleges have differing policies regarding Subject Tests. Some require them, some recommend them, and some do not ask for them at all. Check carefully the testing requirements of the colleges in which you are interested. Generally by the end of the Fifth Form year, students have taken two Subject Tests, possibly three, selecting those subjects in which they are the best prepared. Most St. Albans students take the Math I or II test in addition to one or two others. US History and Biology are also popular choices. In some cases, colleges will not require SAT Subject Test scores from students who have taken the ACT with Writing. If you have questions about which tests you should take, consult your teacher in that subject area or your college advisor.

AP - Advanced Placement
These exams are given in May. They are three-hour examinations based on full-year, college-level courses offered in high school. APs are scored from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score. Colleges have varying policies regarding the awarding of credit or placement based on your performance on AP exams. Although APs were not initially intended to be used in the admissions process, admissions officers do take notice of any AP scores in a student's application. Students may self-report these scores on their applications.

Generally in courses designated Advanced Placement in the St. Albans/NCS curriculum, students are expected to sit for the AP examination. In other subject areas, qualified students may be invited by their teachers to take the AP examination (particularly in history and English) at the end of the course, and they should do so.

TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language
The TOEFL is required by many colleges for students whose native language is not English. The number of years you have been attending an English-speaking school and the individual colleges to which you are applying will determine whether you should sit for the TOEFL exam. If you are considered an international student, it is probably in your best interest to take the TOEFL.

Standardized Testing for Students with Documented Learning Differences
If you have a documented learning disability (a professional has evaluated you and has written a report indicating a learning difference and the need for special testing arrangements), you may be eligible for additional time or other accommodations. If this is the case and you wish to request extended-timed testing or special testing materials, you need to complete a form with Dr. Carrie Friend, St. Albans Upper School psychologist, requesting non-standard testing. Check www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities for more information about the SAT and www.act.org (search: accommodations) for the ACT.

PREPARING FOR THE SAT OR ACT
Test preparation is one of the most controversial topics in college admissions today. As a school, St. Albans neither endorses nor opposes these programs, but we do feel that students and parents should think carefully before committing themselves to a coaching program. No matter what the various companies may say, the evidence is mixed about the efficacy of any kind of SAT/ACT prep. Some students improve with coaching; others do not.

The following statement is excerpted from Taking the SAT Reasoning Test, a College Board publication. Amid all the media hype and self-serving misinformation available on this emotionally charged issue, we believe it contains the most accurate and helpful recommendations on this issue that you are likely to find:

"Students who have taken more academic courses and who have earned good grades generally receive higher scores than students with fewer courses and lower grades. We recommend strongly that you take challenging academic courses and work hard. The SAT is a test of general reasoning abilities, which develop over a long period of time. Hard work in demanding courses usually results in academic growth that is reflected in higher SAT scores."

What kinds of short-term preparation should you do?
Learn what to expect:

- Learn how the test is structured
- Find out how much time will be allowed
- Learn the directions for each type of question
• Read the tips in the SAT Study Guide or Preparing for the ACT Test booklets
• Study the directions and practice sample questions, particularly for the quantitative comparison questions and the student-produced response questions.

What are the best ways to practice?

• Take the PSAT and a practice ACT
• Spend time going over sample questions (the SAT “Daily Practice” app is handy)
• Take sample tests using practice books or online for free at ACT.org and CollegeBoard.org
• There are a variety of options ranging from no-cost (e.g., Khan Academy.org), to moderately-priced online options, to comprehensive small-group courses and individualized tutoring. STA Summer Programs offers three-week courses in SAT Skills and ACT Prep during June and July.

While some practice is important, it should be in moderation, since in this case, practice does not necessarily make perfect. For most students, taking the PSAT and a practice SAT/ACT and reviewing additional practice questions are probably sufficient.

Will test prep help?

There is no proven answer for all students. One resource that may be helpful to families is the Guide to College Admission Testing, created by the Compass Education Group. You can download the publication for free at www.compassprep.com/compass-guide. The guide provides current data, analysis, and perspective to address the most common questions about college admissions testing and preparation.

Perhaps the most important consideration in deciding what to do to prepare for the SAT/ACT is how much time will be involved. Remember that test scores are only one part of an admission application. If you have to choose between spending time on test preparation and spending time preparing for your classes, it will always be more important for you to prepare for your classes.

Scores DO change

Students who take the SAT or ACT more than once almost always earn different scores. In general, scores go up with more math, reading, and wisdom. While the scores of nearly two-thirds of repeat test takers rise, some decline. As a general rule, students with lower scores are more likely to see larger increases than students with higher scores.

What causes score changes?

• **Real academic growth.** While it is likely that individuals develop the verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities that the SAT/ACT measure at different rates, most score gains are probably a reflection of this growth. This is particularly true if students are taking a full range of college-preparatory courses.

• **Practice.** Although practicing may be more beneficial for students who have had relatively little experience with other standardized tests or who are not familiar with the SAT/ACT, even an experienced test-taker will probably benefit somewhat from prior practice on the test. There is free practice available at ACT.org, CollegeBoard.org, and Khan Academy.org. The SAT has a free “Daily Practice” app.

• **Standard Error of Measurement (SEM).** No test, no matter how good, can measure with perfect precision. All tests are composed of a sampling of all the possible questions that might be included. This is why every test has what statisticians refer to as a standard error of measurement (SEM). This means that a student's true score (which would be known with absolute certainty only if a student took a test with every possible question that might be asked) is generally within a range that is plus or minus this SEM. If a student were to take the SAT or ACT several times within the same week or month, most of the scores would fall within this range. This range is reported for each score.

• There might be other reasons for score changes, such as illness, distractions, or careless marking of the answer sheet.
SENDING YOUR TEST SCORES TO COLLEGES

It is your responsibility to make sure that the required test scores reach each college to which you are applying. Some colleges allow you to self-report the scores on the application, while others require you to send them officially (directly, electronically) from the College Board/ACT to the college.

Sending SAT/SAT Subject Test scores: Sign in to your account at www.collegeboard.org and follow the directions.
Sending ACT scores: Sign in to your account at www.actstudent.org and follow the directions.

SAT “Score Choice” Score-Reporting Policy
The Score Choice policy, in theory, gives students the option to choose the SAT scores that they send to colleges: by sitting (test date) for the SAT and by individual test for the SAT Subject Tests. Score Choice is optional, and if students choose not to use it, all scores will be sent automatically.

Colleges continue to determine their individual reactions to Score Choice. Some colleges, despite the policy, still require students to submit scores from all testing administrations. It is important for each student to be clear on the testing requirements of his chosen colleges and universities.

Fast Facts about Score Choice from the College Board

- Students will be able to select which scores they send to colleges by sitting (test date) for the SAT and by individual test for SAT Subject Tests.
- Scores from an entire SAT test will be sent—scores of individual sections from different sittings cannot be selected independently for sending.
- Students can send any or all scores to a college on a single report—it will not cost more to send one, multiple, or all test scores.
- Students will be instructed to follow the different score-reporting requirements of each college to which they apply.

TAKING THE SAT or ACT? SOME TIPS BEFORE YOU GO…

Remember that this test is one piece of a very large puzzle of application information. Do not stress out! You can always retake the test—colleges will look at your highest scores. Your best bet on the test day is to sit back, relax and do your very best!

The night before the test:

- Gather up everything you are going to need. This includes at least two, sharpened No. 2 pencils with good erasers, a calculator with fresh batteries, a snack and a drink, a photo ID, and your registration ticket. Place all of these items together so the whole family (or the whole dorm) isn’t trying to find one or more of them on the morning of the test.
- Know where and when you are supposed to arrive. Call for directions if you need to! Be at the testing room by 7:45 a.m.!
- Go to bed at a reasonable time. Think: school night.
- Set two alarms—one in your room and one in somebody else’s room.
On the day of the test:

- Eat breakfast! You are going to be in the testing room for more than four hours, and you're going to get hungry. Don't forget to bring a snack—granola bars/nutri-grains work well.

- Allow plenty of time to get to the testing center!

- Arrive at the testing center no later than 7:45 a.m.! Don't risk getting locked out because you are 30 seconds late.

- Work only on the section you are supposed to be working on. You will be watched closely. Do your own work and do not disturb anyone else.

- Remember your goal, your strategies, and your specific plan.

- Pace yourself. This is a LONG test.

- USE ALL OF YOUR TIME. Others around you will be closing up their test books and putting their heads down on their desks. You will be going back to look at problems you weren't quite sure about the first time or to work on problems you skipped, leaving them to do if you had time left. USE ALL OF YOUR TIME.

- Stay positive and stay focused. Don't just go through the motions of filling in bubbles. If you find yourself losing focus, stop, take a deep breath, and get back to your task.

- Do everything you can so that when you walk out of the room, you can truly go forward with your Saturday knowing that you did your very best.

Good luck!!
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<th>Form</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Talk to your Biology teacher about whether you should take the SAT Subject Test in Biology. If you plan to take the test, register by May for the June test. If your colleges subscribe to Score Choice, you MAY be able to choose which Subject Test scores you send to colleges. Some colleges require scores from all tests to be sent.</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>You may take the PSAT and/or a practice ACT in the fall (both optional, at St. Albans). Sophomore scores will not go to colleges nor will they enter you in the National Merit Scholarship competition. Use the score reports to identify your testing strengths and weaknesses and to decide which test you prefer (SAT/ACT). There will be emails and announcements about how to register for these practice tests.</td>
<td>If your teacher recommends it, take the SAT Subject Test in Math.</td>
<td>Some sophomores sit for the SAT in May or June or for the ACT in April or June. If you are a strong test taker and would like to take it, you could consider this. You DO NOT HAVE to take the SAT or ACT this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>You will be automatically registered for the PSAT in October. These scores will enter you in the National Merit Scholarship competition, but they will not be sent to colleges. Juniors also may take an optional practice ACT at St. Albans in the fall. Use the score reports to identify your testing strengths and weaknesses and to decide which test you prefer (SAT/ACT). There will be emails and announcements about how to register for the practice ACT.</td>
<td>Plan to take the SAT in December, March, May, June; or the ACT in December, February, April, June. Register on <a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a> or <a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>. Check your own school calendar to determine which dates make sense for you. Most students at St. Albans take the SAT or ACT for the first time in the spring of Form V. Most students will take the test at least twice. You should take the SAT or ACT with Essay at least once.</td>
<td>By the time you finish your junior year, you should have taken at least two, maybe three, SAT Subject Tests. Of the colleges that require SAT Subject Tests, most ask for two; Georgetown requires three. <strong>If you are planning to study engineering in college, you should consider the Chemistry or Physics SAT Subject Test.</strong> You should take your remaining Subject Tests in June of this year (registration deadline in May). Tests are available in the following subjects: Math Level I, Math Level II (precalc and above), Biology, Physics, Chemistry, U.S. History, World History, Literature, Chinese, French, Spanish, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Korean, and Japanese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>If needed, retake the SAT/SAT Subject Tests in August, October, November, December; or the ACT in July, September, October, or December. Early Action/Early Decision testing should be completed by October. SAT Language with Listening Subject Tests are offered in November only. Colleges generally use your highest SAT Reading/Writing and Math scores (even from different test dates) or your highest ACT composite score.</td>
<td>December test dates are the last dates available to you for Regular Decision college applications.</td>
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Financial Aid

Many families are understandably concerned about meeting rising college costs. However, you should not allow your financial situation alone to determine which colleges you will consider, because all colleges offer financial aid packages of one kind or another. The institutions with the highest price tags often have the largest financial aid reserves, and thus should be considered accessible by all families. Any candidate for admission to college should apply for financial aid if his family feels that they may not be able to pay the entire cost either immediately or in the future. Early in the Form VI year students should be sure to check the financial aid deadlines and the forms required by each college they are considering.

There are two types of financial aid: need-based and merit-based.

Need-based financial aid constitutes the major portion of assistance available for post-secondary education. Eligibility for need-based aid is determined by the difference between the cost of attendance and the expected family contribution; the expected family contribution is a figure determined by government formulas. Many colleges also provide a variety of loan and payment options for parents. Your parents should consult with the financial aid office of the colleges to which you are applying for details.

Merit-based aid is generally given to students in recognition of special skills, talent, and/or academic ability.

We will try to inform you if any colleges to which you are applying offer merit awards that require a special application, and we will be pleased to nominate you for any scholarship dollars for which you are eligible. In addition, there are a few websites where you can access information on scholarships. Several of these are:

- www.fafsa.ed.gov: Links to the online need-based government financial aid form, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- www.collegeboard.org: Link to the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile application, another financial aid form required by many private colleges.
- https://osse.dc.gov/dctag: DC's Tuition Grant Program is available to District of Columbia residents for many public and some private universities and colleges.

Students applying for need-based financial aid should register with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile in early fall. You may begin filing the FAFSA on October 1. All forms must be submitted electronically. Additionally, some colleges will have institutional financial aid forms that you will need to complete. These forms contain questions concerning student and parent income and asset information. Comprehensive instructions are provided for completion of the forms. Income and expense items correspond with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) references and definitions. Many colleges also require that families submit complete copies of their federal income tax return.
Colleges review the information you provide to determine your family contribution and financial need. The **Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)** includes a parent contribution, student income contribution, and student contribution from assets and/or benefits. Your family’s income, assets, debts, family size and extenuating circumstances are considered when determining the family contribution. Parents with special or unusual circumstances should discuss their situation with the financial aid officer at the colleges to which their sons are applying. The College Board website (www.collegeboard.org) includes several calculators, including one that allows you and your parents to derive an EFC.

All colleges are now required to post a **Net-Price Calculator** on their websites. By plugging in basic financial information, you can quickly receive an assessment of your family’s EFC. Please note that some calculators are better and more detailed than others; the more information you are asked to enter, the more accurate the calculator will be. Please also note that some colleges do not use cost information from the current year in their calculators; this can affect your EFC. If you plug your numbers into a net-price calculator and the results do not seem to make sense, please follow up with the individual college’s financial aid office.

**Financial need** is the difference between what it will cost a student to attend a college and the family contribution. After your financial need has been determined, most colleges will award financial aid as a “package.” The package may include a combination of scholarships or grants (money that does not have to be paid back), loans (to be paid back after the student leaves college), and campus employment (money earned while in school and sometimes related to the student’s field of study). Normally, the majority of aid comes from the college’s own resources, with the balance coming from federal government sources.

*Please consider this warning regarding additional sources of scholarship assistance.* Many students apply or compete for scholarships from private sources, and some families sign up with one of the many companies that offer help in finding scholarship opportunities. While you might win one or more of these scholarships, they do not usually add up to a great deal of money (compared with your overall college expenses), and you might not feel that it is worth the time and effort to file applications and write essays. Secondly, you must report these additional sources of aid, and your college may reduce your financial aid award (normally the loan or work study portion) by that amount. And finally, most of the “financial aid consultants,” as many of these companies call themselves, are not worth the money they require you to pay before they will help you. In most cases, the “opportunities” they list for you are readily available to you as a matter of course in applying for financial aid, or can be looked up in one of several publications or online. In other words, be careful of misleading promises from these companies, and feel free to ask us about their specific claims before spending your money on them. As a general rule, if a company asks you to pay for a scholarship search or opportunity, **BEWARE.**

Many students and parents want to know if applying for financial aid will affect their chances of admission. The answer is: it might, and it might not. While many colleges still claim that they do not consider a family’s ability to pay when they evaluate candidates, in fact almost all do consider it for at least a portion of the applicant pool. If you need financial aid and are a borderline candidate for a particular school, your financial status might affect your chances of admission or might result in an insufficient aid award if you are admitted. While “need-blind” admissions would prevail in an ideal world, few if any colleges have unlimited financial aid budgets. The stronger you are as a candidate for a given college, the more likely it is that you will be admitted and receive sufficient financial aid. Thus, if you will need financial assistance, we strongly recommend that you apply to at least two colleges where you will be a very strong candidate.

District of Columbia residents planning to attend a public college or university in the United States should investigate the **DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program**, which has been established to pay the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition up to $10,000 per year. This is a publicly funded program and, as such, it can change quickly because of budgetary matters. This funding is for tuition only and is paid directly to the participating college or university. In addition, District residents attending private colleges in the Washington Metropolitan area may receive up to $2,500 a year. Details about this program, including those colleges and universities which participate, are available at http://osse.dc.gov/dctag.

**Fee Waivers:** If you are receiving substantial financial aid at St. Albans, you may be eligible for fee waivers, which can partially cover the cost of SAT or ACT registrations and application fees for colleges. See Ms. Stratton or your college advisor to establish if you are eligible for a fee waiver.

Please note that the methodology for determining collegiate financial aid will differ considerably from St. Albans’ methodology for determining financial aid.
SPECIAL INTERESTS

St. Albans School
Student Athletes

If you compete in varsity athletics at St. Albans or with a competitive club or team outside of school, you may be considering the possibility of playing at the college level. If so, you probably will want to contact coaches at the colleges on your list. A coach may be able to help you in the admissions process. If you encourage a coach to recruit you, and he in turn recommends your acceptance to his school’s admissions committee, you will be expected to participate in that sport if you attend that college.

Think about what criteria are important to you as you evaluate college athletic programs. Is being part of an already successful team important or would you like to have the chance to contribute to a building program? Is your position or talent especially needed in the immediate future? How many seniors will be graduating from the team? Do you want to play for all four years, or are you happy sitting on the bench for your first few?

First, you should talk to your present coach and ask for a candid evaluation of your ability to play in college, including his or her assessment of whether you can play at the Division I, II or III level or whether you are more of an intramural college athlete. You should be aware that Division I and II programs give full and partial scholarships, while Division III programs do not. There are some Division I programs—such as those in the Ivy League, for example—which do not give athletic scholarships; in some cases DI programs may be less competitive than some Division III programs. You must do your research and find out the level of competition at the schools you are considering. You may want to attend a summer sports camp where you will be coached and seen by college coaches who can also assess your skill level.

During the winter and spring of your Fifth Form year, you should write or email coaches at the colleges you are considering. Your letter should include: your interest in the specific college and in the athletic program; a summary of your athletic (including, where relevant, position you play, height and weight, times) and academic performance (SAT/ACTs and GPA) during high school; any specific information regarding camps and competitions you have participated in; and names and addresses (email or snail mail) of your coaches. You may want to include an athletics resume (example on page 44). You may also want to consider making a video of yourself in action! When you visit colleges, make sure you stop by and meet with the coach, if he is available.

As you enter your senior year, you should remain in contact with college coaches, continuing to express interest in their program. You should keep track of the contacts you make and those you receive in turn. Do not be shy about asking a coach whether he feels you can make a contribution to his program and whether he can help you in the admission process. Keep in mind that coaches are looking at many athletes, and their recruitment lists may shift over the course of the fall and winter. Therefore, your own position on a coach’s recruiting list can change. It is important for you to be realistic, understanding that if coaches are not calling you or responding to your calls or emails, their interest in you may have shifted. However, do not allow a coach to pressure you into making a commitment to his college that you may not be prepared to make. Bring your questions and concerns to your St. Albans coach and your college counselor; we can often help you sort through this process.

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

There is a wealth of athletic information available at www.ncaa.org and www.eligibilitycenter.org. This is a great place to begin.

In order to participate in Division I or Division II athletics, you must register and be certified by the National Collegiate Athletic Association Clearinghouse by the time you graduate. You may register at the website above at the end of your Form V year or at the beginning of your Form VI year. Standardized test scores are required as a part of the registration and certification process, so when you register for the SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests, you should list the Clearinghouse number (9999) as one of the institutions to receive your scores.

Are you eligible to compete in Division I or II athletics? Complete the worksheets on www.eligibilitycenter.org to be sure. For more information on athletics at different colleges, try:

NCAA, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, including eligibility and recruiting and information for student-athletes: www.ncaa.org

NAIA, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics: www.naia.org
WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE RECRUITING PROCESS...
The following is unedited advice from St. Albans athletes who have been recruited to play a college sport.

What advice would you give students/families thinking about going through the recruiting process?

- Explore all your options. Never be afraid to contact a coach, because you never know who is going to be interested or who is going to need someone like you on their team. Don't be afraid to be disappointed by a coach or two, because there are a lot of fantastic schools that have great sports programs at all levels, and if you keep trying you will undoubtedly find a sports program at a school that suits you best.

- The best advice I could give is to be patient. It's a long and extremely exhausting process, and many people's inclination would be to commit as early as possible, especially with coaches putting pressure to commit. Often the first school you like will not be the one you like in a few weeks. Visit lots of schools and give each one time to sink in. In addition, I would advise to consider not just the athletic program, but mainly focus on the school. There is no point going to a great athletic program where you won't be happy.

- Contact the coaches yourself personally. Fill out the questionnaire the team has and send the coach an email stating your interest.

- Keep your grades up, especially junior and senior year. Your best bet is having at least a B+ average. Great test scores also help.

- Work hard and get involved in your sport outside of school.

- Be open-minded...don't dismiss any schools out of hand if they approach you, even if you've never heard of them before. But, also don't lead coaches on if you really aren't interested.

- As soon as possible, make a big list of schools that you are interested in, even though some of those schools might be out of your reach. As the process continues, the list gets smaller and smaller, and I personally found it really helpful to have.

- Look for schools first based on what you want to study, then look at athletic programs. There are plenty of great teams out there.

- Taking the initiative was key for me. Because I was being recruited by DIII and DI AA schools, I could not expect those schools to find me. I had to find them. Therefore, by keeping my options open and remaining patient, I was able to find a school both well-suited for me and that was interested enough to allocate a spot. It will take time and diligence. Frustrations are inevitable. Therefore, I would like to reaffirm that it is imperative to remain patient; however, the end result is worth the temporary strain.

- Decide what is important to you and limit your college list accordingly. I visited colleges that didn't match what I wanted, and after I visited, they still didn't have what I wanted.

- Talk to coaches in different divisions to get an idea of expectations and typical practice and competition schedules. Check for an emphasis on academics vs. athletics. Also, you may not be a top recruit at a Division I school, but you may be the top recruit in a DIII school.

- Start early. Decide what you want to accomplish. The best athletic program? The best academic program? Sit down with your STA coach and talk about what he thinks you can do. Make sure you have a good relationship with your coach!

- Develop good relationships with coaches as early as possible—it is much easier for them to support you if they know you well.

- Make sure you know what you are getting into. Don't get your hopes up about a school and sports program because of your initial impressions. Dig deep, and find out if, for example, the coach really is as good a guy as he seemed in a few conversations. Find out if it's the type of program where you will play right away, what the system of play is like, etc. and find out if you can see yourself being comfortable there.
• Consider your options and don’t jump the gun. Your name fluctuates in a depth chart quite regularly so there might be a chance that your number 1 school might come back and say they want you.

• Start talking early. Don’t be humble but also don’t be super arrogant. Be honest with coaches as to where you are looking and how you feel.

• Ask the coach to get an early read from admissions before you visit the college. Ask the coach whether he has slots. If a coach has slots to allocate, he can use these to your advantage with admissions. However, coaches only offer slots to their top recruits.

• Read the athletic website and ask the coach whether they offer athletic scholarships. Some DI schools only offer athletic scholarships for certain sports.

• Be sure to show active interest in any school you are considering. That means talking with the college recruiter that comes to St. Albans, visiting the school, and visiting the admissions office on your visit.

• Ask your coach to speak to the college coach.

• Think about whether you really want to play sports in college. Keep good relations with every coach you talk to, even if you aren’t that interested in their school, because you never know what could happen. Recruiting is more about selling yourself than being found for most people, so initiate contact with coaches.

• Visit the campus, see the facilities, and meet your future teammates: the college has to be somewhere you will enjoy spending four years; make sure you like the people you will be practicing with because they will be the people you hang out with the most; coaches like putting a face to a name.

• Do not take offense if, when you are on your visit, the coach tells you that you aren’t the strongest candidate (you probably aren’t), but they invited you up because they think you could contribute to their team.

• Talk to people who are going/have gone through the process and who you trust.

• Use your current coach and your college counselor!

What do you wish you had known before you began the process?

• I wish I had known how intense it was. There were many calls from coaches to field and visits to arrange. You need to learn how to be comfortable talking to coaches. You need to learn how to say ‘no’. You need to have enough perspective about your own wishes to communicate these to coaches.

• I wish I fully understood being proactive about my recruitment. For example, staying in contact with coaches who have been talking to you even if it isn’t your first choice school at the time because it might become your first choice later if other schools don’t work out for any reason. I also wish I contacted more coaches to get my name out there and have more coaches take a look at me so that I could have more options.

• It is good to know all the recruiting rules during the process, i.e. whether or not a coach can talk to you directly, send you letters, send you emails, etc.

• I wish I had known how important even one point on your GPA can be. I would have worked harder in previous years if I knew then how important it was to recruiting.

• There will probably not be a school that is the “perfect” school. Every place will have positive qualities and negative qualities. Figure out now which qualities are the most important to you.

• You can’t do this by yourself. You will need the help of your coaches and your parents.
Here’s what I wish someone had told me: 1) You need to get tapes and letters out to all the schools you’re interested in. 2) You need to make as much contact as possible with coaches (phone, email) and continue to do so. 3) Make sure they see you! Get to camps and tournaments where you can get really good exposure. 4) Follow up with places you are interested in and make sure they know you still care.

I wish I had known not to get my hopes up. Some places may not be looking for the type of player you are, but that doesn’t mean you aren’t good enough. And if a coach gives you the impression he can get you into his school, don’t take his word for it (St. Albans kids have seen plenty of surprise and great disappointment when coaches have mislead them). Also, be clear that the colleges you apply to would be your top choices if sports were not a factor. You could not make a team, or get hurt, and believe it or not, sports may not be something you want to do all four years.

I had some ideas about the process going in, but I wish that I would have been less scared to take risks. I fought with my parents about sending videos to schools who called me back within a few days saying that they desperately needed players at my position. I was scared of being rejected, but as soon as I realized that I was going to fit in somewhere, I started taking risks and ended up as the top recruit at a school that I didn’t even want to contact at first.

College recruiting has a lot to do with coaches and how well of a fit they see you to be in their program. This means that grades, character, and other intangibles can make or break a recruit as well as his athletic ability. Think about it—however good of an athlete you may be, coaches are looking at five or more guys (at least) who are as capable as you are and play the same position. Thus, you have to distinguish yourself in some way. This has to do with the actual recruiting, and it is very important. First off, get yourself out there. Coaches aren’t just going to start to recruit you, you really must “recruit” the coaches you are interest in playing for. By this I mean do your homework and live on colleges’ athletic websites. This can tell you a lot about the kids on the team as well as their schedules and results. After you have several colleges that you want to target, send them emails and letters putting yourself on their radar screens. Be proactive, but don’t go overboard.

Go to showcases. Coaches want to see you play. If you can’t go to a showcase, at least make a highlight tape.

I didn’t realize how vital academics were. Sometimes it is hard for a coach to tell who is better than who when players are within a certain level of one another, so solid grades can be the X factor that puts you on the coach’s list.

Be organized!

What do you know now that you didn’t know before you began?

I didn’t realize how quickly everything would happen. In a span of three months I went from literally having no idea about where I wanted to go, to having a list of two schools that I was going to visit and then make my decision. It can get overwhelming if you don’t slow down and put it in perspective.

For most people, they end up in a place that fits them well. While you may not get into or be recruited by your favorite schools, you will probably end up in a place that suits you well if you choose to continue your athletic career.

I know now to not assume that anything is a done deal until it is official and that verbal commitments do not necessarily always work out. I also know that you need to find a school that you feel comfortable at, even if you didn’t play the sport that you have been recruited for because it might not work out. I also know that you can still be recruited if you do not have unbelievable stats for the varsity team. I also know not to get your heart set on one school, and if it doesn’t work out, don’t give up because everything usually works out for the best in the end.
SAMPLE ATHLETIC RESUME

Samuel Stalbans
12345 Diagonal State Street
Washington, DC 20016
sstalbans@stalbansschool.org

School Attending: St. Albans School—Washington, DC
CEEB Code: 090165
Graduation: June 2020

Soccer:
School Teams
2019 Varsity: Center Forward—10 wins, 3 losses, 3 ties
2018 Varsity: Center Forward—14 wins, 0 losses, 3 ties
2017 Varsity: Center Forward—8 wins, 7 losses, 4 ties
2016 JV: Goalkeeper—12 wins, 3 losses, 3 ties

Honors/Awards
2019: Varsity Captain
2018: Varsity Co-captain

Local Teams
2015-2019: Regional Select Team
2013-2015: Town League Team

Camp
2012-2018: University of Maryland Soccer Camp

Coaches
St. Albans: Mr. Best Teacher, BTeacher@stalbansschool.org, (202) 537-5555
Regional Select: Mr. Great Coach, GCoach@gmail.com, (202) 555-5555

Swimming:
School Team 2019-2020: Varsity

Local Team Suburban Swim Club, Anytown, Virginia
2016-2019: Junior Competitive Team, Butterfly, Freestyle
2014-2016: Novice Competitive Team, Butterfly, Freestyle

Best Times 200 m. Butterfly: 2:33; 200 m. Free: 2:38

Honors/Awards 2018: Selected to All-State Team
2018: Most Spirited Award

Coaches St. Albans: Mr. Best Teacher, BTeacher@stalbansschool.org, (202) 537-5555
Suburban Swim Club: Mr. Great Coach, GCoach@gmail.com, (202) 555-5555

Tennis:
School Team 2020 Varsity: Plan to play 1st singles
2019 Varsity: 1st singles—8 wins, 2 losses
2018 Varsity: 2nd singles—9 wins, 3 losses
2017 JV: 1st singles—10 wins, 1 loss

Honors/Awards 2019: Captain
2018: Most Valuable Player

Coach Mr. Best Teacher, BTeacher@stalbansschool.org, (202) 537-5555

Recreational Sports: Snow skiing (8 years), water skiing (4 years), fencing (2 years).
Fitness: Running, 3 miles each day; weight training, 5 times per week.
Students in Performing and Visual Arts

If you have a talent in the visual arts, music, dance or theater, you may want to include evidence of your talent as part of your application. This might include photos/slides of artwork, a music recording, or a video of a dance or theater performance. Before sending any supplementary materials, you should consider the following:

- Does your St. Albans or private instructor feel your talent will be favorably reviewed by others? What pieces of work are the best to highlight your talent?
- Do you have the time and resources to showcase your talent in a format that is acceptable to the college? (For example, to make a high-quality recording or digital slides of your original artwork.)
- What format does each college accept in the way of supplementary materials? Contact the admissions office at the college and ask their policy.
- If you do plan to pursue an arts program, your instructor can help you begin your portfolio/audition preparation during the second semester of your junior year.
- If you are planning on pursuing acting or music, an on-campus or regional audition may be required or beneficial. You will need to take careful notice of each college’s audition timeline and expectations.

Depending on the programs you choose, you might find yourself in an evaluation process where your talent is the primary factor in admissions consideration, or you may find yourself in a process where your school performance and talent are equally important. Do your research so that you are not surprised.

Military Service Academies

If you are thinking about attending one of the US Military Service Academies, make sure you do your research! Because the Service Academies bring with them a significant lifestyle change, you will need to carefully consider whether these programs are, in fact, a good match for you. In order to apply to a Service Academy, you must follow directions carefully and be committed to completing the extensive steps necessary in the application process. The application process includes a nomination from your US senator(s) or member of congress, alongside an evaluation of your academic credentials, personal integrity, and physical fitness.

- Start the application process early! Make your initial inquiries as soon as possible in your junior year.
- Request and submit a pre-candidate questionnaire in the winter of your Fifth Form year. You may obtain a questionnaire from any of the Service Academies.
- Plan on attending a summer leadership program, during the summer after your Fifth Form year, at the academies in which you are interested.
- You must be nominated in order to apply to a Service Academy! Write to your senator or congressperson in the spring of your Fifth Form year and ask if they would consider you as one of their nominees. Your letter should include your name, address, social security number, secondary school, year of graduation, name of your parents, and your specific interest in the academies. In turn, the senator or congressperson will contact you with instructions as to what to do next.

*The US Coast Guard does not require a nomination by a senator or congressperson, although the evaluation process does use the same selection criteria as the other military academies.*

ROTC

So...you want to study at Oxford or Cambridge?

Are you sure?

Oxford and Cambridge are England’s elite universities. Steeped in tradition, each university is made up of dozens of individual colleges. Academic lessons are focused and intense and are conducted through lectures and the famous tutorial system. Successful Oxbridge students are passionate about their subject, independent in their pursuit of knowledge, and dedicated to hard work. They learn for learning’s sake alone. The final application deadline for Oxford/Cambridge is October 15, which is closer than it seems.

What should you do now?

1) Identify which university is the best match for you. You can only apply to one of the two.
2) Identify the course that you would like to study. This is key!
3) Investigate the individual colleges at your chosen university—which colleges offer the best environment for you? Learn vocabulary specific to your chosen university/college (do you know what a “tripos” is?).
4) Think about attending an Open Day to gather more information (many of these occur in the summer). Cambridge offers “Introductory Information Days” for all subjects. In addition, individual colleges offer subject-specific and general Open Days. Oxford Open Days are all specific to subject or college; you can find an Open Day schedule at www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate.

What can you do between now and when you apply?

Because offers of admission to Oxford/Cambridge are based on expertise/passion/knowledge of your chosen subject, you should spend the coming months “reading around” your chosen course. You can do this in a number of ways:

1) If your chosen course is a professional one, gain practical experience. Find summer work in a law firm, volunteer at a hospital, shadow an engineer, etc.
2) Subscribe to professional or academic journals related to your field. Read periodicals related to your field.
3) Check if your course offers a “recommended reading list”—if so, read! If not, read!
4) Keep up with current events related to your field. Make reading the newspaper an everyday activity.
5) Think about independent, extended projects that you can initiate to gain further knowledge of your chosen course.
6) Hold on to graded writing assignments related to your course. You may need to submit graded examples of your critical thinking.
7) Look into any required examinations for your course. (Many subjects require you to sit for exams in the early fall.)
8) Make sure next year’s schedule correlates, as much as possible, to your chosen field of study.
9) Research other universities; when you submit your Oxford application, you also have to submit your other five course choices to UCAS.

What will I need to do in the fall?

1) Compose your UCAS personal statement plus additional Oxford/Cambridge statements. These short pieces of writing must convey your passion and knowledge of the subject as well as add personal details to your application.
2) Submit your UCAS application AND Cambridge supplementary application by October 15.
3) Schedule any necessary subject tests (many subjects require special exams).
4) Arrange for graded written work to be submitted prior to November 10.
5) Schedule practice interviews with teachers in your chosen field.
What is the notification timeline?
1) October 15—final application deadline
2) November 10—written work due
3) November/December—interview via Skype in the US or on campus (not all students are invited to interview)
4) Late December/early January—decision letters mailed

How hard is it to get in?
VERY! Even the strongest students must look at Oxford and Cambridge as “stretch” universities. In order to be competitive, you must have taken a large number of AP courses and corresponding exams. It is not unusual for unsuccessful Oxbridge applicants to present multiple AP exams with scores or predicted scores of 5. Excellence in your St. Albans curriculum and a strong written application are only the first steps. It is at the interview stage when decisions are made! In the interview, you must be able to speak broadly and knowledgeably about your subject while conveying your sincere passion for your studies! Oxford and Cambridge expect the best of the best.

General information on applying to universities in the United Kingdom:

How do UK universities differ from American universities?
- Degree length in the UK is usually three years, rather than four. Some degrees will take four years, but this is not the norm.
- In the UK, you apply directly to your program of study: you must choose what you want to study before you apply. Degrees in England are extremely focused.
- Scottish universities are more flexible: even though you choose your course of study, you have greater freedom to move between different courses.
- UK university admissions are focused more on standardized test scores rather than course grades. UK universities will equate AP exams to A-Level exams. Most students in the UK take three A-Level exams; to be competitive for English universities, you should plan to take three AP exams by the spring of your senior year.
- In the UK, admissions decisions are usually made by course tutors (professors), not admissions officers.
- UK universities tend to be larger; the small liberal arts college does not exist in the UK.
- Residential facilities will differ dramatically, from residential halls to bedsits to self-catering accommodations.
- UK universities do not usually have sports teams affiliated with the university, rather sports teams affiliated with the local region or area.

What do I need to know before I apply?
- UCAS is the clearinghouse organization for all UK applications. You will apply through the APPLY section of www.ucas.com—UCAS will communicate your decisions to you, and you will communicate which university you will attend, through UCAS.
- You may apply to FIVE courses in the UK. You will use just one application and pay just one application fee. Your five courses can be from five different universities, or you can apply to more than one course at one university.
- Your courses must be related in subject matter, because you will write only one personal statement, which must reflect your interest in your chosen course of study.
- You will need one letter of reference. This can be from your college advisor or from a teacher of the subject area to which you will apply.

FOR INFORMATION ON ALL UK UNIVERSITIES: www.ucas.com
RESOURCES

St. Albans School
Books

- General guidebooks, as well as books on financial aid, college athletics, and a variety of other subjects can be found in the College Office, the Ellison Library, websites such as Amazon, or area bookstores. As with any other research project, the more sources you use, the more informed you are.

- The Fiske Guide to Colleges: A subjective guidebook with narrative (and opinionated!) descriptions of some of the most popular colleges in the US. There is a mobile app also available.

- College Board College Handbook, Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges, Barron's Profiles of American Colleges: These three guidebooks are factual and objective. Use these to find statistical information. Each guide lists every college in the US and a few abroad.


- Looking Beyond the Ivy League by Loren Pope: A thoughtful book examining wonderful colleges that are not in the Ivy League.

- Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope: A detailed examination of colleges that provide outstanding undergraduate experiences.

- Visiting College Campuses by The Princeton Review: Some tips to plan your college visits!


- College Unranked: Affirming Educational Values in College Admissions edited by Lloyd Thacker of the Education Conservancy: A collection of essays written by professionals in the college admissions field. These essays examine the state of the college application process today. Highly recommended!

- The Gatekeepers by Jacques Steinberg. An inside look at the admissions process at a highly selective university. A page-turner that is well-written and true, but not for the faint of heart.

Useful Websites

**General**

- [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org): Information about the PSAT, SAT/Subject Tests, AP tests; register for the SAT and Subject Tests; send your SAT and Subject Test scores to colleges, practice for the SAT, search for colleges, find out about the CSS Profile financial aid form.

- [www.ACT.org](http://www.ACT.org): Information about the ACT; register and practice for the test; send scores to colleges

**How do I find the perfect college?**


- [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

**These are very helpful!**

- [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org): Download the Common Application or apply online; lots of university information.


- [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org): Essential reading if you want to play a varsity sport.

**Financial Aid**


- [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org): The online source for the CSS Profile application.

- [http://osse.dc.gov/dctag](http://osse.dc.gov/dctag): Find information on the DC Tuition Assistance Grant.


- [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org): Excellent info.
Thinking about attending university in the UK?
www.ucas.com: Extensive search and application information about UK universities. UCAS is the clearinghouse for all UK applications.
www.hotcourses.com: Search by course for UK schools.
www.britishcouncil.org

Thinking about attending university in Canada?
www.studyincanada.com: Search for universities.
www.ouac.on.ca: The website for applying to universities in Ontario.

ROTC
www.nrotc.navy.mil: Navy ROTC
www.goarmy.com/rotc: Army ROTC
www.afrotc.com: Air Force ROTC

STA Website
Log in to www.stalbansschool.org and go to your “Class of 2020 College Advisory” Group page to find College Office handouts, forms, events, and college visit information. There is a page for students and a page for parents.

Important Contact Information

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Timothy Hudson, Associate Director of College Counseling
thudson@stalbansschool.org 202-537-6598

Samuel Schaffer, Assistant Director of College Counseling
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Linda Stratton, College Coordinator
lstratton@stalbansschool.org 202-537-5660

Patricia Boman, Registrar
pboman@stalbansschool.org 202-537-6442

College Office/Registrar Fax Number
202-537-5587

Register for the SAT and send scores:
www.collegeboard.org
Speak to an SAT representative:
866-756-7346

Register for the ACT and send scores:
www.act.org
Speak to an ACT representative:
319-337-1270

NCAA Clearinghouse:
www.eligibilitycenter.org
NCAA CEEB Code (for sending test scores): 9999
877-262-1492

College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile:
https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org
844-202-0524

FAFSA
www.fafsa.ed.gov

Advanced Placement Information
https://apstudent.collegeboard.org
888-225-5427

ST. ALBANS CEEB NUMBER: 090165