



Top-10 College Admissions questions...

... and the answers to know now!

#1: WHAT ROLE DOES MY COUNSELOR PLAY IN THE COLLEGE PROCESS?

Your CBC Counselor is ready to help you figure out any of the below! Come see us (or just send us an email) anytime you have a question. Help us, help you. How? One way is to read and be responsive to our emails!

#2: HOW DO I KNOW WHICH COLLEGES MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR ME?

Research, research, research. There are many ways to find a school that might be right for you! One great way to get started is Naviance. Check out the "Supermatch College Search". Start out with 3,685 schools and, as you answer questions, the list is narrowed to a more researchable list. This is one (and by far the most popular for CBC students) of many, great ways to develop/expand/refine a list of schools to which to apply. Talking with your CBC Counselor, as well as to family and friends and coaches, attending college fairs and visiting campuses are great ways too. As you find schools that you like, request more information and plan to meet with the rep at a fair or here at CBC if they visit us. Build a solid list of schools, including ten or so possibilities. You can narrow your choices late in junior year or in the summer before senior year. One common approach is to try to develop a list of five or six schools to which to apply. A couple of these should be "reach" schools (schools which are a bit of a stretch for you to be admitted to/afford). A couple should be "safety" schools (schools that you can be pretty sure you'll be admitted to/afford). And, then a couple should be in the middle. All on your list should feel like they might be a "good fit" for you!

#3: WHAT IS THE COMMON APPLICATION? WILL I USE THAT?

There are more than 750 colleges that accept something called "The Common Application". It is what it sounds like – one application that you can send to multiple schools. We suggest that if you are applying to 3 or more "CommonApp" schools, then it is probably worth your time to complete it. You can create an account any time in your high school career and then use the "rollover" feature when you are ready to start applying during senior year. Now is a good time to start familiarizing yourself with The Common App, so click www.commonapp.org/

#4: WHAT ABOUT THE ACT? WHEN SHOULD I TAKE IT AND HOW MANY TIMES?

If you're a Junior taking Algebra II, take the ACT for the first time in the Spring of your junior year. The ACT is based on Algebra through Algebra II. Taking the ACT before then is not a bad idea, but because you are still learning some of the content covered on the test, Spring is a great time to take it. If you are in advanced math, then taking it earlier than that is an option. It is common to take the ACT two or three times – some students take it five or six times. College reps have not reported any reason NOT to take it multiple times. In fact, it can definitely be to your advantage! Why? Many schools will take your highest "subscore" in each of the four ACT content areas (math, English, reading, science) and create a "superscore" – which is a new composite ACT score that can help your chances of admission to a school. Ask your CBC counselor for more information!

#5: HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE ACT?

First, always take the most challenging, rigorous courses you can, study hard and do your best. That is the best test prep there is! Also, consider prepping with a private tutor (ask for a list), books, or, of course, a website. Free, excellent test prep options on the web include: Naviance test Prep right on your naviance homepage! Also, check out www.number2.com, www.sparknotes.com/testprep/act, and www.actstudent.org (there is also an inexpensive option on www.actstudent.org that is more in-depth). CBC offers the ACT Prep class too! See the CBC Online Courseguide for more information.

#6: WHEN SHOULD I APPLY? WHAT ABOUT DEADLINES FOR APPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS?

Plan to APPLY EARLY in your senior year. Deadlines start around November 1, but as a general rule for all schools... the earlier the better. Remember, don't go "trick-or-treating" until you have a couple of applications done. **It is your responsibility** to check with your respective colleges to see if they have any deadlines that you must meet. While this list is *NOT COMPREHENSIVE*, it does give you some examples or early deadlines. Click HERE for a list of college deadlines, fees, and requirements! (Link updated 2018)

#7: WHAT ABOUT COLLEGE VISITS?

College visits are the *best* way to check out a perspective school. Ideally, these should be planned and scheduled in advance so that the school knows you're coming and that you can get the most out of your visit. If you have a possible major in mind, you may be able to arrange to sit in on a class or meet a professor. Asking questions is key to maximizing the benefits of your visit. If you're seriously considering a school, schedule an interview — colleges keep track of which students seem most interested. Afterward, send a thank you! See your CBC Counselor for a list of great questions to ask on a college visit. If you can't make it to a school in which you're interested, check their website, and find local opportunities to meet with the college's rep at a fair or maybe even here at CBC. Remember! College rep visits to CBC are always listed and updated in Naviance. (*Note: Your parents should notify Mrs. Eagan or Dean Myer about a college visit in order to have an "excused" absence.*)

#8: WHAT ABOUT LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION? WILL I NEED THOSE?

These are commonly required by Common Application schools and private schools. See your counselor for a letter of recommendation request form and complete the brag sheets in Naviance (one for your counselor and one for your teachers). Continue to develop good relationships with teachers. Let them get to know you and your strengths so that they can write you a personalized, strong letter when the time comes. Ask early. You'll be glad to have it out of the way when it comes time to finish your applications. Always say "please" and "thank you".

#9: HOW AM I GOING TO PAY FOR ALL THIS?

College admissions reps are great resources for specific information about each school. The CBC Counseling Department compiles a list of scholarships and emails many to seniors throughout the course of the year. But, there are hundreds of thousands of scholarships and resources out there! For tons of great scholarship opportunities, please visit the scholarship search in Naviance. Also, check out www.fastweb.com, a searchable database with hundreds of thousands of scholarships... some of which may be right for you! Also, as you apply to any college/university, be sure to inquire about school-specific scholarships and apply for them. Encourage your parents to complete the FAFSA (free Application for Federal Student Aid) starting in the Fall of senior year. They can learn about this at www.fafsa.ed.gov. College Scorecard is another great resource (US Dept of Education) that includes Information on college costs, graduation, and post-college earnings. And, check out www.meritaid.com. Search for any school and see their merit-based awards. Most important, ask College Admission Reps and Financial Aid folks at the college for information and assistance. Your CBC Counselor can help you get in contact with those folks. (*Note: High GPA in rigorous courses, ACT score, and leadership experience/characteristics are often considered for scholarships.*) Other helpful sites include: www.finaid.org, and www.schoolsoup.com. As far as money goes, the earlier you get your applications in, the better. Sometimes with money (and other things like housing preferences), the early bird gets the worm. For some schools, your scholarship application is part of the admissions application. But, for others, there is a separate application. Ask admissions folks about scholarships that their school offers and how to apply!

#10: HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREERS THAT MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR ME?

Naviance includes a user-friendly interface that allows you to research careers and find out about college programs that relate to those careers. It is a great way to help you sort out your skills, interests and values as they relate to the world of work. This wonderful resource is a *GREAT thing to do over Winter/Spring/Summer break!*

Bonus! #11 WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

Reread the above and take action! This whole process goes best when the student is in the driver's seat. Make an appointment to sit down with your CBC Counselor to review this information and ask any questions! We are ready to help!