

# College Counseling

## Steps in the Application Process

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### What's Most Important \*

“Intellectual curiosity; the ability to study across disciplines”

1. Transcript
2. SATs, ACTs
3. Letters of Recommendation
4. Essay
5. Extracurricular/Community Activities
6. Interview (optional at many schools)

\* According to college admissions officers

### 1. Build a list of colleges

- Talk with friends.
- Talk with family, teachers, Peter and Page.
- Create your “profile”: geography, size, majors, 2/4 year, selectivity, core requirements, athletics, etc.
- Use on-line college search sites (i.e., [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and [www.mycollegeoptions.com](http://www.mycollegeoptions.com)).
- Use college guides (I particularly like Fiske’s).
- Attend college fairs.
- Get the Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)). You can apply on line and download supplemental forms.

### 2. Write your essay (see questions on Common Application or from individual colleges)

- Work closely with your writing teacher.
- Make at least three revisions.
- Modify as appropriate for individual colleges.

### 3. Teacher Recommendations

- Ask one or two teachers (depending on the college’s requirement) if they would be willing to write recommendations for you; usually one from science/math and one from humanities.
- If appropriate, also ask a specialist to write (music or art are the most common).
- Give plenty of notice, even if you’re still uncertain about where you’re applying.
- For each college, give the teacher: 1) the recommendation form from the application, after you have filled out your section and (if applicable) signed the waiver; 2) a stamped, addressed (but NOT return addressed) envelope; 3) note affixed with deadline for the application.
- If the application is to be “bundled” (all parts mailed in one packet), ask teacher to seal the envelope and sign across the flap before giving it back to you.
- If you decide not apply after all, tell the teachers right away so they won’t send those recommendations.

### 4. The Application

- Make at least two copies of the form, one for a draft and one as a backup in case you damage the original by accident.
- If you complete the application by hand, when you copy from your draft, be neat and legible. Avoid erasing and scratching out.

- Make a copy of the completed application and any supplements. Applications are rarely lost in the mail, but it's best to be prepared.
- Deadlines: the deadline is almost always the date by which the application must be mailed (ask the Post Office to date stamp it). Occasionally, it is the date by which the application must be received, and the form will clearly state that.
- **DO NOT** mail the application Registered, Receipt Requested, Overnight, etc. If no one is in the Admissions Office to sign at the time of attempted delivery (i.e., weekends or off-hours), the packet will be returned to you.
- If the application is supposed to be "bundled", tell your recommenders and Page. When you collect the teachers' recommendations and the school forms and transcript, they must be in sealed envelopes, signed on the flap. If they are unsealed, they are no longer valid or official.

### **5. School Report Form**

- Fill out the top section of the School Report Form (and the Mid-Year Report Form if there is one) as completely as possible (name, courses).
- If using the Common Application, fill out the Applicant section of one form (if you like, you can type it on-line and print it out). We will complete it, make copies for each school that uses the Common Application and keep a file copy.
- Ask Mrs. Cahill or Page for Waring envelopes, address and stamp one for each college (two, if there's a Mid-Year form), and turn them in to us with the appropriate forms.

### **6. College Counseling Office**

- Meet with Peter to discuss your choices.
- Give Page your list of colleges and deadlines, and tell her about any additions or deletions as we go along.
- Indicate how you're applying (Early Action; Early Decision; I.D.P., Regular)
- Complete your Transcript Extracurriculars checklist and meet with Page to finalize your transcript well before the deadline.

### **7. When You Hear from Colleges**

- You may receive an e-mail or postcard saying your application is not complete for some reason. 99% of the time, everything is in, but the computer data tracking is often weeks behind the mail delivery. Don't worry. Let Page know and keep checking your status on-line.
- A college unfamiliar with Waring may ask for more information. Our transcript cover letter mentions the written evaluations and Admissions may request a copy. We never send them without written permission from your parents.
- As you begin to hear from colleges, please let Peter and Page know right away about all decisions, whether it's Accept, Defer, or Reject.
- Also tell the teachers who wrote for you or helped in other ways.
- If you are waitlisted, talk with us about steps you might take.
- When you decide to accept an offer, you should contact all the other colleges to officially withdraw your application. Let us know when you have done so.
- Remember, at Waring we do not announce college decisions, except final choices.