College Counseling Philosophy

At Hackley we believe that exploring one’s goals, considering one’s college options, and applying to colleges can and should be an exciting and highly developmental process. As we prepare and support our students, we have several primary goals: to make sure students are ready to begin the college process, to help them explore their goals and know themselves, to introduce them to their college choices, and to support them as they research their options, present themselves to colleges, and complete their applications. From creating a curricular plan to devising a testing schedule, from suggesting college options to offering mock interviews, from helping with college essays to coaching students on how to present themselves to our 120-130 college visitors each year, we consider ours a full-service program.

We also offer one other thing: a healthy perspective. While many of our students attend the most selective colleges in the nation – and we prepare our students to maximize their options – we believe it is more important that students find collegiate programs and communities that “fit” them – schools where they are most likely to realize their full potential academically and personally, regardless of the college’s selectivity or brand name. Based on our collective 60+ years of college admissions and college counseling experience, we have come to believe strongly in the “win-win scenario,” as every Hackley student has the ability to find great matches in colleges that represent a range of admissions selectivity. Hackley is a rigorous school with high-achieving students, but we do things a little bit differently: we celebrate learning, personal growth, friendship, community, and the “college fit” rather than our “college list.”

We wish you the best, whenever you begin to explore the world of higher education, and we look forward to working with you!

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**College Search and Application Timeline**

**Junior Year**

**FALL:**
Prepare (or continue preparing) for the **December SAT or ACT**. Register online for the December SAT (collegeboard.org) or ACT (services.actstudent.org) by early October. Include Hackley’s CEEB code when registering: 335540.

College evening in early fall for first-time junior parents.

Those who are interested may take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. Hackley does **not** require that juniors take the PSAT (except for anyone who isn’t planning on taking the ACT or SAT by December). The PSAT is a *practice* test for the SAT. Scores “count” **only** in the National Merit and National Hispanic Scholarship competitions; these scores are **not** sent to colleges.

Take the SAT or ACT in December.

Sign up for subsequent ACT (February) or SAT (March) exams, if desired.

**WINTER:**
Early January: College evening for juniors and their parents.

January or early February: Initial family meetings with college counselor. Students, parents and college counselor together create “exploratory” college list, discuss testing, senior year curriculum, financial aid and other important issues.

February ACT & March SAT.

Research colleges online, contact admissions offices, read about colleges in *Fiske Guide* and *Princeton Review*.

Plan to visit a handful of colleges, if at all possible, over spring break, to test your theories about what you would like in a college. Visit schools representing a range of selectivity.

**SPRING:**
Visit a few colleges during spring break, if possible, but don’t interview at this time. (Note: Juniors will not be excused from school to visit colleges except in special circumstances, such as a scheduled audition or special athletic recruitment program, and with the approval of one’s college counselor.)
SAT or SAT Subject Tests are offered in early May and early June; ACT is offered in April, June and July.

Plan summer college visits! Choose schools to visit based on spring break visits, chances of admission, and other research. It is very important to find schools you really like in a range of selectivity, and it is especially important to find “likely” and “very likely” schools that you really like.

Meet with your counselor in April, to adjust your college list, review grades and scores, etc.

Do a mock interview with your counselor in May.

Consider asking one (and only one) of your teachers to write a recommendation for you. (See your counselor first.)

Attend the Common Application workshop held by your counselor in late May.

**Summer:**
Visit colleges, read college literature, and work to narrow down your college list. Make sure to visit all of the colleges you’re seriously considering by the end of summer; there’s very little time to visit during the school year. Visit “very likely” schools early in the summer (the most important college to find is a “very likely” college that you really like). Remember also that if you don’t visit a college, you may jeopardize your chances of admission. June is often a very good time to visit colleges.

Interview on-campus, when you visit, if interviews are offered. Interviews help to establish your interest in and “fit” for colleges and thus are very important, even when they’re not required. They’re also a great way to learn more about a particular school!

We strongly encourage students to write drafts of college essays and complete the Common Application activity list before school starts in the fall. It will make your fall much saner.

**July:**

July ACT.
Register for appropriate tests. Note that the August SAT and September ACT tests are the only “fall” tests sure to arrive in time for ED and EA application reading. The
registration deadline for the August SAT is in July; for the September ACT the deadline is in early August.

Senior Year

AUGUST:
Start the Common Application personal essay and activity list if you haven’t already. “Invite” your college counselor on the Common Application (see instructions from College Counseling Office).

SEPTEMBER:
Continue working on your essay(s), and make an appointment to see your college counselor to finalize your application list and discuss teacher recommendations. Ask two teachers if they would be willing to write recommendations for you. “Invite” your teachers (after they’ve agreed to write) via the Common Application and “assign” them to each of your colleges. Remember that ED, EA and “rolling” admission schools have early due dates.

Send your test score reports, to the schools that require official score reports, 4 weeks before the application deadline. (Note: you must send score reports to colleges, when required; Hackley cannot do this for you).

OCTOBER:
Families applying for financial aid file the “FAFSA” and “CSS Profile” forms.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER:
Students do the bulk of their applications. Students applying to colleges with “rolling admission” continue to submit applications in October. October 15, November 1, and November 15 are common Early Decision and Early Action application deadlines.

December 1 is our suggested “target date” for completing all college applications. (Note that ED, EA and rolling applications are submitted much earlier.) While actual deadlines are established by the colleges themselves, experience has taught us that the senior year is much saner if you aim to complete all applications by December 1. In any case, we require three weeks to process our part of your application, called the School Report Form.
December - April:
Students receive admission decisions from colleges. **Keep your grades up!** (You should know that offers of admission are always contingent upon completion of the senior year with similar grades as previously earned, and we have seen offers of admission revoked for both academic and behavioral reasons.) Second trimester grades will be sent to colleges in early March, right around the time many colleges are making decisions.

January:
Seniors “deferred” from ED and EA admission rounds should see their counselors about sending updated information and a letter of continued interest.

April:
By mid-April, you should have received all admission decisions and financial aid awards. You must select a college and make a non-refundable tuition deposit at only one institution by **May 1**, even if you’re on a “waiting list” at another institution. You are also required to notify all of your other colleges, in writing, that you don’t intend to enroll there. Students on waiting lists should see their counselors about final decisions and waiting list strategies.
Rules and Expectations for the College Search and Application Processes

We are very lucky to be part of a school where students, families, and school employees value our community and treat one another accordingly, with respect, integrity, and friendly concern. Those three principles also guide our expectations for students and families in the college search and application processes.

Behavioral Guidelines

It is no secret that the college search and application processes can sometimes cause stress, so it is important that we operate with a shared understanding around expectations and that we treat one another with kindness, consideration, and sensitivity during this time. We often tell students to limit their conversations about “college stuff,” so that the topic doesn’t dominate their daily lives. We also suggest to students that they not “overshare” their experiences and opinions, as doing so can cause misunderstanding and social friction. For example, we believe that the topic is best avoided around the lunch table and dinner table; one’s college search is personal and a subject poorly suited for group discussion. Students should not give college advice to their peers, as it may well be misleading. Finally, students should encourage one another in the process, respecting their unique goals, life journeys, and college choices.

Gossip and Competition

Every year we ask juniors, in their questionnaires, what they like best about Hackley. Without question, the number one response is the Hackley community. We are very fortunate that our juniors and seniors generally maintain a warm and respectful relationship with one another throughout the college process, avoiding a tendency in many schools towards gossip and unhealthy competition.

Gossip is idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others. Students and families should not share others’ college admissions goals, interests, college lists, results, qualifications, or any personal information without explicit permission from the student in question. We also suggest strongly that students not share their own college process or their personal information with anyone but their closest and most trustworthy friends, and that family members respect the student’s privacy and the cohesiveness of the School community by avoiding the subject with their own peers. Years of experience have also shown us that one’s college search process is best not be shared on social media, both for the protection of the individual and the interrelationship of the community.
Hackley is very fortunate in that its students tend to be more supportive and less competitive with one another than is true at some other schools. Competition among classmates can be extremely harmful to a school community and contrary to Hackley’s values. Students should understand that they are not in direct competition with one another in the college admissions process, except to the degree that they are in competition with other applicants of similar backgrounds and abilities from many, many schools, in the Northeast and nationwide. There is no quota for Hackley acceptances to a particular college; we have had years when certain highly selective colleges have accepted far more students than any such quota would allow, as well as years when those same institutions have not admitted a single Hackley applicant. In essence, colleges will admit whomever they want, based on what the individual students might contribute to their community, generally without regard to any sort of apportionment among high schools.

**Integrity**

Students are expected to represent themselves and their intentions with honesty and integrity as they communicate with their Hackley college counselors, their families, colleges, and college representatives. Furthermore, their college applications and all supplementary materials must be completed accurately, honestly, and thoroughly. It is the students’ responsibility to complete the entire application themselves, and to make sure their writing is completely their own work. Writing must not be over-edited by others, no matter how good the editors’ intentions may be. Since well-meaning editors are often unfamiliar with the ethical limitations on such advice, we provide a quote from Hackley’s History Department Head, Mr. Davies, as guidance:

“It is not only acceptable, but desirable, to seek help with writing. We all benefit from having another person with whom to share ideas or another pair of eyes to read over our writing. Violations of academic integrity occur, however, when consultation shifts to creation; that is, when another person actually provides content rather than guidance. For example, it is fine to have a parent, sibling or tutor read over a draft in order to say something like, “Your third paragraph doesn’t seem to have much to do with your thesis,” or, “I can’t see how your conclusion follows from your argument.” No other person should, however, rewrite the paragraph or thesis to make it better, nor should they tell you how to rewrite it. Simply put, it is perfectly acceptable to have help in pointing out a needed improvement; it is not acceptable for anyone other than you to write (or tell you how to write) the needed improvement.

Not only is it simply wrong to present unoriginal or over-edited work as one’s own, it is also not to the student’s advantage. College admissions officers read thousands of applications, year after year. They know what an original, 17-year-old’s essay sounds like, and if it sounds over-edited or inauthentic, it won’t help the applicant.
Likewise, students should be careful not to exaggerate or misrepresent their records, activities, accomplishments, and intentions in college applications, in interviews, or in any other means of communication.

Rules and Regulations

College Visits
Students are urged to visit colleges that they may wish to attend, as this is important to selecting colleges and to demonstrating interest in colleges. Advice regarding the best times to visit is given by the college counselors. Juniors will not be excused from school to visit colleges except in special circumstances (such as a scheduled audition or special athletic recruitment program) and with the approval of one’s college counselor. While we urge students to complete all of their college visits before the beginning of senior year, seniors who must miss school to visit a college must get permission from their college counselor at least seven days in advance. Hackley also provides a Senior College Visit Day on a Monday in late September, a day when seniors are excused from classes.

College Representative Visits to Hackley
Each year, in September and October, more than one hundred colleges and universities send admissions representatives to visit Hackley, to meet with interested seniors. Often these visitors comment on Hackley students’ thoughtfulness, enthusiasm and friendliness, leaving duly impressed by our seniors. We strongly encourage seniors to meet with these representatives, to demonstrate interest in the colleges, to ask questions of the visitors, and to learn from the responses to their peers’ questions about the institution or its admissions process. Often these meetings occur during class time, in which case the senior must seek the teacher’s permission to miss the class (using our office’s form) at least two days in advance of the meeting.

The College Application Process
As one might imagine, Hackley expects all of its students and families to abide by the rules and expectations of the college admissions process as set forth herein, as well as those set forth by the colleges to which the student applies. Any attempts to deceive, cheat, or gain unfair advantage during the process will be subject to Hackley’s disciplinary system. Family member violations may be interpreted as breaching the expectations inherent in Hackley’s school-family partnership and may therefore influence the status of the enrollment contract.
Students (and their families, where concerned) are expected to follow the rules, requirements, and agreements set forth within the college applications themselves and by Hackley. These include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Early Decision commitments, by the letter and in spirit
- Reporting probations, suspensions, and the like (see Hackley Student Handbook)
- Making an enrollment deposit at only one college, and in a timely fashion
- Withdrawing excess applications and turning down excess offers of admission in a timely fashion, as instructed by the College Counseling Office

Students (and families, where concerned) must abide by any commitment made either verbally or in writing to any college or to its representatives, and must refrain from making any commitments they cannot honor.

**Guidance, Assistance, and Student Responsibility**

Hackley students are lucky to have as much help as they need from their college counselors. The advising process is intrinsically personalized to the student from its outset. Starting in January of junior year, we meet with students to advise them in all aspects of discovering, selecting, visiting, and interviewing for colleges. We provide personalized advice on standardized testing and on course selection for senior year, we help students develop their own college search criteria, and we suggest colleges for the student that are likely to meet those criteria. We advise juniors throughout the spring, as they visit colleges and refine their college searches, we conduct mock interviews with them before the summer interview season, and we help them choose teachers to ask for recommendations. We hold a Common Application workshop before the summer, and we remain available during the summer, to provide guidance as students continue to visit colleges and start writing college essays. During senior year, we help students finalize their lists and weigh strategic issues, and we spend a great deal of time helping them on the very personalized details of their applications, from deciding when and where to send which test scores, to which majors/schools they might apply to within a university. We read application essays and “short answers,” and we review other critical parts of the application, such as the “activity” section. In essence, we provide a full-service college counseling program.

It is up to the student, however, to take advantage of our assistance, to follow our recommendations to set up appointments, share their work with us in a timely fashion, use the organizational tools we provide, and follow our instructions in requesting that transcripts and recommendations be sent to colleges. This level of responsibility is nothing new to students; they already take ownership in
completing their homework, writing papers, and preparing for tests. We are available to provide all the help they need, but in the end, it is up to students to take responsibility for monitoring their day-to-day progress. We have great faith that they will complete the search and application processes successfully, as Hackley students have done for more than 120 years, and that by spring of senior year they will have grown significantly in terms of personal responsibility, sense of identity, and self-confidence.
Roles and Responsibilities

Students
This is a rewarding and exciting process, and it requires your leadership. This is your future. Your actions will determine your directions. No one can tell you what the right answers are. There are no daily assignments, no quizzes along the way, no prerequisites, no progress reports, no grades. Many people care about you and how you determine your future, but they’re only coaches on the sidelines.

Here is a short list of your responsibilities:

• You must take an active role in the process. You’ll get out of the search and application process as much, or as little, as you put into it.
• Keep a healthy perspective. This process doesn’t have to be stressful if you are organized and remember that the glass is 95% full: you’re going to college (☺) and with your Hackley education, you’ll be ready to excel there.
• Make sure to set up a testing schedule with your counselor, and to REGISTER for the tests in advance of the registration deadlines.
• Research colleges online and in recommended guides (such as the Fiske Guide and the Princeton Review’s “The Best 382 Colleges”).
• Come up with thoughtful questions before visiting each college – questions that really matter to you – for the information session presenter (usually admissions staff) and the tour guide (usually a student). Otherwise, the visit will be less interesting and less useful.
• Set up a mock interview with your college counselor before the summer.
• Meet with and update your counselor regularly.
• Keep your parents informed about what you’re doing and thinking. This will help them worry (and nag) less, and they’ll feel free to allow you more control of the process.
• Organize yourself, using the tools provided by the college counselors.
• Complete a draft of at least one essay over the summer, after discussing the topic with your counselor.
• Visit all of the colleges you’re interested in before the end of the summer, and make sure they represent a range of selectivity.
  ➢ Put at least as much energy into finding and visiting likely and very likely colleges that you really like as you do into finding more selective colleges for your list.
• Follow your counselor’s instructions, plan what you need to do and when you need to do it, and meet all deadlines. This is your responsibility, not your parents’ or your counselor’s. If you need help, seek out your counselor, who can provide tools to help you keep on track.
• Complete every part of your applications yourself; your parents should not even know your Common Application password!
• Show your essays, short answers and extracurricular section to your counselor at least two weeks before they’re due.

Parents
The trickiest part of the process, for parents, is how to provide just enough impetus to motivate your children, without taking control. Walking the fine line between managing your child’s life and letting go is nothing new to parents! You may be tempted to take control, but it’s important that you respect your child’s ownership of the process. You can be very helpful to your child, but you should also understand your limits.

• Be patient with your children and allow them to ease into the process. They shouldn’t have all the answers at the beginning; allow them time to explore and figure it out without trying to “correct” them. It will usually take a few months until students really take ownership of the process.
• Ask your child how you can help with various organizational tasks:
  o purchasing college guides and test prep materials
  o arranging test prep classes/tutors, as may be appropriate
  o setting up spring break college visits (but wait on the interviews)
  o setting up summer visits (and interviews, if offered)
• Learn about college costs and financial aid, as appropriate, and give your child early and clear guidance as to the role finances will play, if any, in college selection
• Listen to your child’s thoughts about colleges, without passing judgment or sharing your own opinions. You may ask clarifying questions, but keep your own preferences at bay.
• Help your child brainstorm questions that will elicit information germane to his or her own priorities. This is especially useful prior to college visits.
• Be sure this process is about your child’s college education and not about your desires or fears.
• Be realistic in putting together the college list (consult our online admissions data and your child’s counselor) and make your children put at least as much energy into finding and visiting “likely” and “very likely” colleges that they really like as they do into finding more selective colleges for their list. And react with as much enthusiasm to the less selective colleges that fit their needs as to the more selective colleges.
• Ask your child if he or she would like help organizing the application process, or suggest asking the counselor for organizational tips or tools. (Remember: we are happy help students organize, but it’s up to them to ask for our assistance and to then carry out the plan.)
• Don’t go near the applications. The students must complete these themselves, and parent involvement in this task is inappropriate and, most often,
counterproductive. That doesn’t mean your child can’t show you the essay if he or she wants to, but be careful to give only general reactions. We are professionals at this. We provide thorough instruction in class and in workshops on completing applications; we ask students to seek our help individually; and we will gladly help students with every part of the application for which they seek our guidance.

Most importantly, remind your child how proud you are of her, and reassure her that this is a “win-win” situation; she will attend a college that meets her needs, and her motivation and Hackley education will prepare her to do great things in college.

**College Counselors**
We counselors are eager to support students and their parents in many ways throughout the college search and application processes:

- We provide timelines, advice and detailed information about the process -- in classes, in regular grade meetings, in workshops, and in individual meetings as often as they wish.
- We try to get to know each student and family so that we can suggest specific colleges which might meet a student’s needs.
- We will give students a rough idea of their chances of admission to these schools and advise students on building a balanced list of colleges.
- We can help students plan for special talent-based admissions processes (such as athletic recruitment, auditions and portfolios), and consider special types of school options (such as conservatories, art schools, and military academies).
- We can advise families about the financial aid process and financial alternatives.
- We can suggest methods of exploration and decision-making. We provide information and suggestions about visiting colleges and interviewing, and we do mock interviews with all of our students before the summer.
- We give advice about standardized testing and course selection.
- We advise students during the application process itself, help students with their essays, activities list and “short answers.”
- We maintain professional relationships with college admissions offices, and we support our students’ applications to colleges with our written recommendations and other written and verbal communication with admissions officers during the application reading seasons.
- We advise students about representing themselves in person and in writing – to put their best feet forward – and we also advise them how to demonstrate genuine interest in the colleges they are considering, so as to make them attractive candidates.
- We host some 110-120 college visitors at Hackley each fall and help students make the most of those visits.
• We provide occasional reminders to students and parents, and we are available to answer as many questions as students and parents may have during the process.
• Most importantly, we hope we can help make this a positive, “win-win” process for students by helping them find a number of colleges that “fit” them, in a range of selectivity.

While we are here to support students in many ways throughout the process, of course we are not surrogate parents. That is, we don’t drive the process or manage each student’s applications. We are always here as a resource and advocate, and we will teach students how to “own” the process themselves. We will give them all the tools they need to succeed, and in the end the students accept the ultimate responsibility for completing the process. And by accepting and fulfilling this responsibility, students gain independence, confidence, maturity, pride, and a sense of self – all of which are critical as they head off to college.
Standardized Testing

Variations on College Test Requirements, in Order of Frequency

1. SAT or ACT (thousands of colleges, a few of which also require the optional essay/writing section of the SAT or ACT)
2. No testing required (hundreds of colleges)
3. SAT + 2 Subject Tests, OR ACT (2 very selective colleges)
4. SAT + 2 Subject Tests, OR ACT + 2 Subject tests (6 very selective colleges)
5. Multiple combinations allowed, including SAT, ACT, Subject Tests, APs… (a few colleges)
6. SAT + 3 Subject Tests, OR ACT + 3 Subject Tests (Georgetown only)

When to take the tests:

Sophomore Year

Pre-ACT and PSAT 10:

- Offered at Hackley in February (Pre-ACT) and March (PSAT 10). Use test scores and personal preferences to determine which test to prepare for in junior year. Scores do not go to colleges.

Junior Year

PSAT:

- Those who are interested may take the PSAT/NMSQT at Hackley in October. Hackley does not require that juniors take the PSAT (accept for anyone who isn’t planning on taking the ACT or SAT by December). The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT. Scores “count” only in the National Merit and National Hispanic Scholarship competitions; these scores are not sent to colleges.

SAT/ACT:

- We require that all juniors take the SAT or ACT by December of junior year. (Students probably need not take the optional essay-writing section, unless they are interested in public universities in California.)
- Some test prep companies may suggest that you can wait until later to take the SAT or ACT for the first time. Please ignore this advice; while well meaning, there is no strategic reason to wait, and we need this baseline to begin the college counseling process.
• Juniors may retake the ACT in February, April, June, and July or the SAT in March, May or June. (Note that SAT takers may want to save the SAT June date for Subject Tests, if their colleges require Subject Tests.)

AND MAYBE

SAT Subject Tests: June of junior year (2 or 3, IF required or IF you’re going to do very well). We’ll discuss Subject Tests at your first family meeting in January.

Advanced Placement Exams: Given at Hackley, on weekdays, during the first two full weeks of May. Required for AP subjects you’re taking, and optional for other subjects, most commonly AP English Language and/or AP U.S. History. You choose what scores to send where – or not send. (We discuss optional AP exams and guide students through the registration process in our Intro. to College class in the fall of junior year.)

SENIOR YEAR

SAT/ACT:

SAT: possible last attempt in August (or occasionally October, November or December for regular decision applications).

OR

ACT: possible last attempt in July or September (or occasionally October or December for regular decision applications).

AND/OR

Subject Tests: possible last attempt in August (or occasionally October, November or December for regular decision applications).

SPRING SAT & SAT SUBJECT TEST DATES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Test(s) Available</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
<th>Late Deadline</th>
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<td>February 14, 2020</td>
<td>March 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2, 2020</td>
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<td>April 3, 2020</td>
<td>April 21</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>July 18, 2020</td>
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<td>June 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(not offered in NY State)*

It is the student’s responsibility to register for these exams and, in fall of senior year, to have official score reports sent to the colleges that require official score reports. We will counsel students as to which tests to take and when, beginning in our first family meeting in January or February. When registering for the SAT, ACT, or Subject Tests, please remember Hackley’s **CEEB code: 335540**. It is very important to use the same name and initials each time you register (it is always best to use your full given name when registering for any standardized test).

We recommend that you *sign up early* for tests: the closer the deadline looms, the harder it may be to get a seat at a preferred testing site.
College Application Decision Plans

It is important to research the admissions deadlines and decision plans at each college you’re considering. However, what you find out may be confusing. To help you understand the various plans, the most common ones are explained below.

“Deadline” Admissions Plans

Most selective colleges operate admissions processes that have specific application deadlines. These colleges collect all of the applications they receive up until the deadline, then they read them all and select from among the entire group of applications. Applying earlier than the deadline does not give the applicant any advantage; the applicant is in competition with all of the other applicants who apply under that decision plan.

REGULAR DECISION: This is the most common, basic process. Applicants apply by the deadline (often January 1st or 15th), receive an admissions decision (usually between the third week of March and the first week of April), and have until May 1st to choose from among their offers of admission.

EARLY DECISION (“ED”): This is a “binding” admissions process. The student pledges to attend the college, if admitted. Students apply early (often by November 1st or 15th) and receive an early admissions decision from the college (usually in mid-December). If admitted, students must enroll in the college and withdraw their applications to other colleges. (There are special arrangements regarding ED financial aid applicants; see your counselor.) Obviously, students may not apply to more than one ED college at a time.

EARLY DECISION II (“ED2”): This is also a “binding” admissions process. ED2 works just like ED, except that the due dates are later. ED2 deadlines are often January 1st or 15th, and the applicant usually hears by February 1st or 15th. If admitted, students must enroll in the college and withdraw all of their other applications. This second ED process exists primarily for two reasons: to allow applicants more time to make up their minds about such a commitment, and to allow students who were denied admission in an earlier EA or ED round to apply ED2 to another college.

EARLY ACTION (“EA”): This is NOT a binding admissions process. EA students apply early (often by November 1st or 15th) and receive an early admissions decision from the college (sometimes in mid-December; sometimes not until January of February).
However, *students admitted under an Early Action plan are NOT required to attend the college.* Students may wait until May 1st to decide whether or not to enroll in an EA college that accepts them. Generally, students may apply to more than one EA college and can even apply ED to one college and EA to others (however, there are some notable exceptions, see below). Of course, an ED commitment is binding and always applies.

**RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION:** This plan allows EA applicants to apply to other EA colleges, but prohibits these students from applying under ED plans.

**SINGLE CHOICE EARLY ACTION:** A few colleges have this modified EA plan. It works just like the EA plan described above, in that students apply early and receive a decision early, but they are not bound to attend the college. *The difference is that Single Choice Early Action applicants may not apply to most other colleges under an EA or ED plan.* Some of the most selective colleges instituted this plan to prevent the strongest applicants from taking multiple spots at the most selective EA colleges.

**“Rolling” Admissions Plans**

Colleges that have rolling admission accept applicants on a “rolling” basis. As the applications come in, admissions officers read the applications in batches and send out decisions as other applications are still coming in. A college might, for example, start accepting applications on September 15th, and start sending out decisions on October 1st. *It is generally in the student’s best interest to apply early in the rolling admission process, as it often becomes more selective as the admissions cycle progresses.*
Visiting Colleges

We recommend that you try to make official visits to all of the colleges you’re seriously considering before September of senior year. These visits are important for two reasons: 1) so that you can find out about the colleges on your list, and 2) so that the colleges know of your serious interest in them. In fact, if you don’t visit a college, you may be jeopardizing your chances of admission. It is also very important that these colleges range in selectivity from your “very likely” schools to your “unlikelies.” There are four optimum time periods to visit campuses, each with its own particular purpose:

- **In the beginning of the college search**, college visits can help you understand what you like and don’t like. Big/small, rural/urban, north/south – some of the basic criteria for narrowing down one’s college search are merely theoretical abstractions to many high school students until they actually get a first-hand look at what these differences mean. Often, spring vacation of junior year is a good time to visit a few different types of schools (including visits to “100-level” classes, if possible). These visits can help you define your search. (Note: Juniors will not be excused from school to visit colleges except in special circumstances, such as a scheduled audition or special athletic recruitment program, and with the approval of one’s college counselor.)

- **During the summer between junior and senior years**, it is VERY important to do the bulk of your visits. Students who do not visit colleges in the summer almost always regret it. True, campuses are often empty, but you can learn enough about a school during the summer to determine whether or not you want to apply to a school. The logic is simple. Visiting a relatively long list of schools takes lots of time – much more time than seniors and parents will have in the spring of junior year and the fall of senior year. It’s also a good time to visit colleges farther away. The senior fall is extremely busy; seniors have the toughest courses in the school and the most demanding leadership positions, as well as college applications to do. Trying to visit more than a few colleges during the fall just doesn’t work.

- **The fall of senior year** is a good time to revisit some of the colleges on your short list, when the colleges are in session. This will add greater depth to your understanding of the school. If the college is too far away to make that revisit convenient, you can wait until April, after hearing from college admission offices. Hackley frowns on students’ missing school in order to visit colleges. Instead, we suggest using Professional Development Day weekend, Columbus Day weekend and the three-day Senior College Visit Day weekend made for college visits (we give seniors a Monday off just for this purpose). If you absolutely must miss school to visit a college, you are required to get permission from your college counselor and all of your teachers at least a week in advance of
the visit. Forms for this are available in the College Counseling Office (and in the back of this handbook).

- **In April of senior year**, after you have received your acceptances, you may want to revisit a top choice or two in order to make your final college selection by May 1st, the national reply deadline.

**A good college visit takes energy on the part of the student.** If you are passive on your college visits, you will learn much less about the college, enjoy the visit less, be less impressed by the college, and make a lukewarm impression on the admissions office. (If you take a college tour, for instance, and just listen to the tour guide, you will learn more about buildings than about college life. But if you come armed with good questions, you can direct the discussion away from the physical structures to more important issues.) *Be careful not to let your parents take the lead;* they should stay in the background. *You* need to address your questions and concerns. If your parents take over, you will learn less about what matters to you and run the risk of leaving a weak impression in the admissions office. Remember also to give each campus your full attention when you visit, even if you don’t think you’re as interested in the college. If you just drive through a campus on your own or visit on a day when the admissions office is closed, for example, you’re likely to get a very different (and less positive) impression of the college and risk your chances of admission.

Remember to have fun on your visits! Try to leave your preconceptions at home, stay open-minded, and be ready to take each college on its own terms. See what great opportunities the colleges have to offer! We truly do live in a land of plenty; if you look for the good, you will indeed find lots of it.

**The Visit**

It’s a good idea to set up your college visit 4-8 weeks in advance, or even earlier if planning a summer trip. Do not try to visit more than two colleges in a day – even two is a stretch. Plan to spend some time on campus, and it’s nice to explore the surrounding area as well. There are a number of things to do:

- **All initial campus visits should include an official visit to the admission office.** As part of that visit, you should take a tour of campus and attend either an information session or a personal interview. (If interviews are offered, we recommend them only after May of junior year.) This official contact is important for two reasons: 1) the admission office has important information to impart to you, and 2) it’s important that the college know you visited campus; at most colleges, students who don’t visit campus have a harder time in the admission process.
• **NO “DRIVE-BYs”**. Very often, the first impression one gets arriving at a college changes dramatically during the tour and information session. For the same reason it is of relatively little value to visit a college when the admission office is closed or is not hosting visitors.

• **Parents and students should take separate tours, if feasible.** This way parents and students can ask what they want without fear of embarrassment! This strategy also provides insights from two different student tour guides. (Try to ask the guides some of the same questions, then compare your notes later on in the car.)

• **Ask lots of questions.** Ask the **same** questions of a number of different people: faculty, admissions staff, and at least two or three students. Write down your questions beforehand so you don’t get distracted and forget to ask them during your visit.
  - Read the bulletin boards and kiosks.
  - Eat in the dining hall, if possible.
  - During the academic year, attend a class or two, if available.
  - During the academic year, spend a night on campus, with a friend or with an admissions host.

**Interviews**

Interviews are required by some colleges, recommended by others, and not offered at all by some. **YOU must check with each college to find out what its policy is.** When you call to schedule a campus visit, ask the college about its interview policy. If it is suggested that you have an interview, go ahead. (If you’re nervous, or if you don’t think you’ll interview well, see your counselor.) Some of the more selective colleges interview **applicants only;** they wait until you apply, then arrange an interview.

Interviews are beneficial for several reasons. They serve as a chance for you to “put a face to a name” and to put your best foot forward. They give you a chance to show your **enthusiasm** for the college, help you learn more about a college and allow you to ask your questions. They also provide a chance for you to explain your transcript, your accomplishments, your activities, your ideas, and your goals.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TIPS ON INTERVIEWING, SEE THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW GUIDE PAGES FOLLOWING THIS SECTION.**

**Questions to Ask**

Good questions are sometimes hard to think of on the spur of the moment, so it’s important to come up with good questions **in advance** and write them down. This will also show colleges that you have “done your homework.” You can then ask these
questions at every college you visit, take notes after you leave campus, and compare answers among colleges later on.

It’s not a good idea to ask obvious questions or questions that could be answered by a thorough reading of the college’s brochure. Questions like “How many students go here?” or “Do you have a business major?” indicate a lack of preparation for your visit and a lack of interest in the college. If you dig just a little deeper, however, you can come up with some good questions along the same lines: “I know that you have about 5000 undergraduates and 3000 graduate students. To what extent do you think the senior faculty include undergraduates in research opportunities when they have a number of graduate students eager to do research in their fields?” or “I see that business is a popular major here. Given your rather rural location, do many of your business majors take advantage of summer internship opportunities instead of internships during the school year?”

**Academic Questions**

While no one expects you to have chosen a major at this point, it is important to learn about academic programs you might be interested in, and colleges do expect you to be able to talk about possible areas of academic interest. Pick a likely major or two or three and read about those subjects in the college’s course catalog (available online at each school’s website). Beyond the confines of specific subject areas, you also want to find out what it’s like to be a student at a particular college:

- What courses are required for graduation? Are there distribution requirements or some form of general education requirements?
- Is there a freshman seminar or foundation course of some sort?
- Do “TA’s” (graduate teaching assistants) teach any/more of the courses?
- What is the range of class size and what is the average? What percentage of classes are large lecture courses?

In addition to such standard questions, try to get a sense of the academic atmosphere by asking your tour guides and other students some more probing and difficult questions:

- Which nights of the week are the big studying nights, and which are the big partying nights? (If the students name Wednesday through Saturday as big partying nights, that tells you something about the school right there!)
- How/when did you choose a major?
- What are the professors like? How do professors treat students? How accessible are the professors? To what degree are they interested in their students?
- Have you conducted any research projects with professors?
• What services does the career placement office offer?
• On the whole, are students motivated more by intrinsic factors (a sincere interest in the subjects they’re studying) or more by extrinsic factors (getting into grad school or finding a job)? Do students talk much about their classes or about “issues” when they’re not in class?
• Do you feel like you’re getting a good preparation in your major? What makes you think so?
• How much studying do students do every day? (To look for on your tour: Are there lots of students using the library, given the hour of the day?)
• What do you like most about the academic program? What would you change about it?

Social Questions
Keep in mind that you’re not just choosing a school; you’re choosing a home for four years. What are the other students like and how do they spend their time? Ask students:

• What do students do in their spare time? Do they play sports, throw pottery, go skiing, go to fraternity parties, go to lectures, or just hang out in small groups and talk?
• How many students attend the games? Do they attend the concerts and plays?
• Are students conservative or liberal? Activists or apathetic? Somewhere in between? What’s the hot topic on campus this year?
• Are there any campus “hang-outs”? When are they open and what are they like?
• Do students join fraternities and sororities? If so, what percentage of men and women join? When do they “rush”? Are the fraternities/sororities residential? Do they dominate the social scene? Is there anything to do besides going to frat parties, or does everyone go?
• Do students stay on campus on weekends or go home?
• What do you like most about the social life on campus? What would you change about it?
• Where are the students from? How diverse is the student body in terms of ethnic, geographic, cultural, socio-economic, political, gender, sexual diversity? (How important is this to you?) How accepting/supportive are students of differences? Do all the students seem to be made from the same mold?
• Do the students seem friendly and cooperative or standoffish or competitive? Are the students happy? As you overhear conversations, do the students sound like students you’d like to know?
• What three adjectives would you use to describe the stereotypical College X student?
**Student Life**

Questions about activities you’re interested in can be directed to admissions personnel or to students. The admissions representative may have a greater breadth of knowledge about activities, but a student who participates in an activity you’re interested in will give you a more thorough introduction.

- **SPORTS:** If you’re interested in a particular sport, find out how competitive it is to make the team. Is there a varsity team in the sport? Is there a JV team? Perhaps it’s a club team. (Club teams play against other colleges, but with less funding. They may or may not have a coach; game schedules may be limited; the team may need to raise its own funds, etc.) Is the sport offered as an intramural sport? If so, what’s the competition like?
- **MUSIC:** If you’re interested in music, how competitive is it to earn a spot in the band or sing in the choir? Are ensembles open to non-majors as well as majors? If the top ensembles are very competitive, are there less competitive alternatives? Can non-majors take lessons? What’s the cost of lessons? What are the studio instructors like? Do you have to audition to take lessons?
- **THEATER:** What is the theater program like? Are productions open to non-majors? If so, how tough is it to get parts? How many large or smaller productions are there each year? What about stage crew opportunities?
- **COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Is community service popular? What sort of volunteer opportunities exist on campus or in town? Is there an organization that coordinates or facilitates student service? What percent of the students get involved in community service?

**Campus Location**

Questions about the school’s location and its effect on student life are crucial. Don’t make assumptions about rural or urban settings; there can be plenty to do in an isolated location, and sometimes students in cities spend all of their time on campus anyway.

- Where do students go to do their basic shopping: clothes, soap, books, snacks...? How do they get there?
- What’s public transportation like? Are cars allowed on campus? Are cars allowed for freshmen? What percentage of students have cars?
- What activities are available locally for fun? Do students take advantage of the local area or do they spend their free time on campus?
- How close is the nearest city? What’s the city like? Do students go there? How often? What do they go there for? How do they get there? Does the school provide a shuttle service?
- What sort of outdoor recreation is available/popular?
- If the school is relatively isolated, what is there to do on campus on weekends?
- How do students get home on vacations?
- How safe is the campus is for young women? What are the safety statistics?
College Interview Guide

Interviews are required by some colleges, recommended by others, and not offered at all by some. **You must check with each college to find out what its policy is.** When you call to schedule a campus visit, ask the college about its interview policy. If it is suggested that you have an interview, go ahead, but not before the summer after your junior year, unless you are visiting a college far away during Spring Break of your junior year and you do not anticipate returning to campus because of its distance. (See your counselor if this is the case.) Some of the more selective colleges interview applicants only; they wait until you apply, then arrange an interview. Students who prepare for interviews and do a mock interview with their counselor are likely to do very well in an interview. If you’re particularly nervous, or if you don’t think you’ll interview well, see your counselor.

Interviews are beneficial for several reasons. They serve as a chance for you to “put a face to a name” and to put your best foot forward. They give you a chance to show your enthusiasm for the college, help you learn more about a college and allow you to ask your questions. They also provide a chance for you to explain your transcript, your accomplishments, your activities, your ideas, and your goals.

Your relationships with adults at Hackley are pretty informal. Your teachers know you, and although you may not realize it, they cut you a lot of slack in your behavior. As informal as the interviewer may try to make the interview feel, this is a formal meeting, and you should be on your best behavior, highly interactive without overdoing it to a false degree. Look your interviewer in the eye, smile and listen. Think of this as meeting a good friend of your parents at his or her place of work. “Cool” attitudes should be left behind, as they will telegraph arrogance; you are forging ahead into the adult world and need to show friendliness, confidence and maturity.

Prepare for the Interview

- Dress appropriately. Wear nice Hackley-like clothes: clean, neat, tucked-in shirts, collars, no short skirts/shorts, no cleavage, no T-shirts, no denim, no flip-flops, no facial jewelry. Do not overdress: jackets and ties don’t really work and will make you uncomfortable.
- Shake hands with the interviewer right off, smile, and look him or her in the eye. Show that you’re glad to meet him or her. Always be respectful, and unless your interviewer is a student who asks you to use his or her first name, make sure to address the interviewer as Mr., Ms., or Dr.
• Do not chew gum. Use a breath mint beforehand. 😊
• Read up on the college, especially the school’s own brochures. Find out what the college thinks is special about the education it provides. Look in the college’s course catalog on-line: study the graduation requirements, and read up on the departments and programs that interest you.
• Be able to explain your interest in the college, in both general and specific terms.
• Come up with good questions about the college – not questions that can be answered by a simple reading of the school’s materials. We suggest you prepare these in advance.
• Show enthusiasm for the college.
• Be ready to discuss your interests and how they might continue at this college.
• You don’t need to be sure of your major, but you need to be able to show enthusiasm for at least one subject offered at the college.
• Make sure you’ve read about the college’s offerings in your subject(s) of interest (read this in the course catalog on-line). Come up with specific questions.
• Make sure that activities you say you want to continue are indeed offered at the college.

At the end of the interview, get the interviewer’s card (or name and address) and write a thank-you note or email, citing at least one reason why you enjoyed talking to him/her. This is especially important when interviewing with an alumna/us.

Interview Strategy: The Personal Narrative

College interviews are different than many other interviews in that the subject matter is relatively narrow – at least the essentials. Any normal college interview will include the following primary topics:

• Your interest in attending and “fit” for the college in question
• Your academic interests and abilities
• Your extracurricular involvements

This presents the interviewee with an advantage; since you know what some of the primary topics will include, you can prepare ahead of time. You can come up with your own personal narrative in advance.

Start by making a list of all the things you want the college to know about you. Then ask your parents, a close friend, and a teacher or two who knows you well to list a few things they would want colleges to know about you. Have you read 47 books in the last 5 months? Did you found a club that has really taken off in popularity? Are you the type of student who loves to learn just for the fun of it? Perhaps you’ve taken interesting classes over the summer. Maybe you did a really exciting internship. Maybe
you’re heavily involved in certain types of community service. Are you enthusiastic? If so, what anecdote or information would you share to make the interviewer understand that? Are you the hardest worker on the football team? Did you write a history paper that you really liked? What is it that makes you interesting and reflects your strongest qualities?

Then try to see how you might talk about your strongest qualities in answer to questions related to the above topics. If you wait for the interviewer to ask you how many books you’ve read in the last five months, you may never get to tell him! If you think about it ahead of time, you’ll probably work that fact into your answers. In fact, if you think about it, you might work those reading habits into either your extracurricular or academic narratives. Remember, the interviewer doesn’t want to work at trying to find the right question to ask. Make it easy for him; take the ball and run with it. If he asks about your interests, take it upon yourself to answer in detail, including any of the related topics in your personal narrative.

Answering vs Informing

If you’re a math student at heart, you may be inclined to give simple answers:

“What are you interested in studying in college?” the interviewer might ask.
“Business,” you might answer.

That answer may be correct, but it’s not good enough for a college interview. That’s the math test answer. You want the essay answer -- detailed, allowing you to show your strengths, interests, and experiences. You don’t simply want to give a correct answer; you want to inform the interviewer.

HERE’S ONE POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO THE SAME QUESTION:

“My favorite courses in high school have been my math classes, and I’m taking both AP Statistics and AP Calculus next year. I’m also looking forward to taking Econ next fall. I’m pretty sure I want to study business or economics in college. At home I always pick up my dad’s business magazines and try to make sense of them, and this past summer I had the chance to do an internship for a few weeks in a marketing firm. (Give some details.) I’ve been reading your course catalog on-line and have noted that you offer courses that sound interesting to me. There is one called “International Marketing and the Cultural Divide” that really caught my eye. I’ve studied Spanish for a number of years and went to Spain on a school trip, and I think it would be really interesting to try to look at product promotion from a multicultural perspective. Based on what I saw in
my internship, I can only imagine how hard it must be to try to sell a product in another culture – even within the United States – and I’m convinced I should keep studying Spanish in college. I’m still just starting to learn about the business world, of course, but your program makes it sound really exciting.”

**IN THIS ANSWER, THE SAME STUDENT HAS MADE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT POINTS.**

1. Not only is the student interested in business, but he also has taken the time to research the college’s offerings. This lets the college know that he’s serious in his interest and that he has taken the time to see if the college is a good academic “fit.”

2. The student has told the interviewer that he’s taking AP Statistics, AP Calculus, and Economics. This lets the interviewer know that he’ll have a strong preparation for business study and that he is not afraid of challenging quantitative courses; in other words, the student has both the interest and the smarts.

3. The student’s mentioning of the internship shows that his interest in business is not all theoretical, and his wondering about cross-cultural marketing shows that he actually thinks about business issues. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to bring up the internship; you can’t assume that the interviewer will ask another question that will lead to this topic.

4. The fact that the student has studied Spanish and has had some experience in another culture may add to his attractiveness as an applicant to the college – or the business program. This could be developed more in this question or in another question, if appropriate.

5. The last sentence of the response also demonstrates some reasoned enthusiasm for the college, adding to the student’s response to “why are you interested in attending this college?”

This is just an example of how having a prepared narrative can help both you and the interviewer. You don’t want to make the interviewer work to try to guess the right questions to ask. What if he never asks, “Have you spent time overseas?” If you give the math test answer, he’ll never find out about it. If you go into your personal narrative, he’ll learn all sorts of things he may not have asked about but definitely wants to know. (A worksheet is on the next page to help you get started.)

**A Final Question**

Interviewers will often ask, “Do you have any questions about College X?” As mentioned above, make sure to come up with a few good questions before you
interview – not questions that are easily answered in the brochure. Good questions reflect the fact that you’ve done your research, and have thought a lot about how the college might be a good “fit” for you. Your questions may address academic, extracurricular, or general topics:

“I’m interested in business and Spanish. How difficult is it to double-major?”
“Do most of the students stay on campus on the weekends?”
“Are all of the musical groups open to non-majors?”
“Can you tell me more about the career development office and internships?”
“I get the sense that the students here are really excited about their coursework. Do you think that’s true?”

Don’t Overdo It

It’s important to prepare for an interview, as your preparation will enhance your conversation, but do remember that this is indeed a conversation. Interviewers may take you in all sorts of directions in an interview. If they do, don’t resist them, and don’t worry! Your interview is not your only chance to tell the colleges about yourself; that’s why colleges have applications! Don’t feel you have to touch on everything you thought about in your preparation. Be well prepared, but don’t be pushy about your own agenda for the interview. As one admissions director puts it, “They do not want to be so intent on following a script that they come across as overly rehearsed and unauthentic.”

REMEMBER THE KEYS TO A GOOD INTERVIEW:

- Prepare thoroughly for each interview
- Show enthusiasm for the college and for your academic & extracurricular interests
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Smile 😊

Questions You Might Be Asked

COMMON QUESTIONS:

- Tell me about your interest in College X.
- What are you interested in academically?
- Tell me about your extracurricular activities.
- What would you contribute to our school?
- Do you want to go abroad in college?
- Do you have an idea of what you would like to pursue as a career?
- Which activities do you plan to continue in college? (Be sure ahead of time that any activities you mention are actually possible at this college!)
- What is Hackley like?
• If you could change one thing about Hackley, what would it be? (Best to pick something minor and frame it in a positive way.)
• Describe a teacher who has inspired you.
• What has been your favorite course this year and why?
• What are your strengths and weaknesses as a student?
• Talk about a recent paper or academic experience you’ve found interesting.
• What academic experience have you had that changed the way you think or feel about a subject?
• What do you do in your free time?
• What did you do over the summer?
• What books have you read lately? Which one was your favorite and why?
• Do you have any questions about College X?

LESS COMMON QUESTIONS:

• If you were to take a Gap Year, what would you do?
• How would your friends describe you?
• What movie did you like best that you saw recently and why?
• Which issue in the world or country most concerns you? Why?
• How would you contribute to the diversity of College X?
• Tell me about yourself.
• What makes you unique?
• Tell me about your passions.
• What keeps you motivated?
• What is one important thing about you that would not be on your application?
• Tell me about your family.
• What is the hardest thing you’ve ever had to deal with and how did you handle it?

You might even be asked an odd question. If you are, don’t get rattled; there is no right answer. The interviewer is just trying to get to know you. Take your time. (Feel free to think out loud, if you want; this can cover the awkward silence: “Let me see…if I could be any animal...well, I know I like dolphins, since they always seem to be playing...and they’re pretty smart...but I’m not sure if I’d like to eat fish every day...actually, I’d probably like to be a panda bear, since they’re vegetarians, but they’re not prey.”)

• If you could meet anyone from history, who would it be and why?
• If you could be any book character, who would it be and why?
• If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
• If you could be any animal (or tree, or fruit, or ice cream flavor, etc.), what would you be and why
Personal Narrative Preparation Worksheet

List your strengths/ things you want the college to know about you, including your personal, academic and extracurricular interests (remember to ask others about this, too):

1. ____________________________________  5.__________________________________
2.__________________________________  6.__________________________________
3.__________________________________  7.__________________________________
4.__________________________________  8.__________________________________

Now, by the same item number, note evidence or anecdotes that illustrate each of your strengths or interests listed above:

1. ____________________________________  5.__________________________________
2.__________________________________  6.__________________________________
3.__________________________________  7.__________________________________
4.__________________________________  8.__________________________________

Next, match the items above to the most appropriate interview question below:

“Tell me about your interest in this college.” Item numbers: ____________________
“Tell me about your academic interests.” Item numbers: ____________________
“Tell me about your extracurricular activities.” Item numbers: ____________________

Now, research each college, so you know how your interests fit the college’s offerings.

Your interest:_________________________ College’s Offering:_________________________
Your interest:_________________________ College’s Offering:_________________________
Your interest:_________________________ College’s Offering:_________________________
Your interest:_________________________ College’s Offering:_________________________
FINANCIAL AID PROCEDURES: 2019-2020

STEP ONE: Research financial aid options

Visit each college’s web site and complete the Net Price Calculator, so you can see what financial aid you might qualify for. Consider applying to low-cost, in-state public colleges, as well as high-cost/high-aid independent colleges. If you’re looking for merit scholarships from colleges, remember that you’re much more likely to get them at colleges that are “likely” or “very likely” to admit you. To look for college scholarships from other sources, visit www.fastweb.com for a free and very useful scholarship search program.

STEP TWO: Research college financial aid application requirements

In September, students should make sure they have all of the financial aid instructions they need from each college’s website, including which financial aid forms each college requires and when each college requires you to file them. Parents should start gathering all of their 2018 tax forms and information.

STEP THREE: Complete and file forms in October

The FAFSA form. The FAFSA form is required by all colleges to which you apply for financial assistance, and for most types of federal and state aid. File the FAFSA on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov. (Be careful: do not to go to fafsa.com, a commercial site.)

The FAFSA is available to file starting on October 1, 2019, using 2018 tax information.

The CSS Profile form. Many colleges also require the College Board’s CSS Profile form. To register for the CSS Profile, go on-line, at www.collegeboard.org/css. When they register, students/parents will need to know which colleges require the Profile. (This should be spelled out in each college’s financial aid information; the complete list of schools requiring the Profile can also be found at www.collegeboard.org.)

College-specific forms. Some colleges will require their own institutional financial aid form as well as, or instead of, the Profile.

Colleges often require copies of tax forms. These may include W-2 forms, 1040s, and other supplemental information. Many colleges will also require financial information from a divorced/separated parent.

If at all possible, the figures you submit on the FAFSA and the Profile forms (and on your taxes) should agree. Discrepancies in numbers could delay your financial aid award.

If you apply to a school under an Early Decision plan (as opposed to Early Action, rolling, or regular decision plans) be aware that these plans are “binding.” This means that if you are admitted Early Decision and the Early Decision financial aid award is acceptable, you must withdraw your applications for admission to other schools. If the aid award is not acceptable, even after appealing the award, you must turn down the offer of admission promptly. This does, of course, prevent you from comparing the ED aid award with aid awards from other colleges, since those wouldn’t be available until March or April, long after making your ED decision. The bottom line: if you feel you need to compare financial aid awards to make a final decision about where to attend, you should not apply Early Decision.
IF COLLEGE COSTS ARE DAUNTING, CONSIDER THESE OPTIONS…

“Free” Schools
- Berea College, KY
- U.S. Military Academies

Merit-based scholarships
- Academic record
- Exceptional talent (sports, music, art…)
- Test scores
- Ethnicity
- Certain majors

Military
- Full or partial ROTC scholarships
- Service academies (free!)

Lower-cost alternatives
- SUNY System
- Best buys
- Some public universities

Special programs, exchanges
- National Student Exchange (NSE)
- A number of colleges offer accelerated, 3-year degree programs

Need-based financial aid
- Will we qualify for need-based aid?
  - Search “College Board Expected Family Contribution Calculator” online.
- Visit the financial aid websites of colleges of interest and complete the college’s Net Price Calculator to see how the college might meet your financial needs.

From parents’ professional organizations, employers, clubs, or religious groups.

From the colleges themselves.
- Write to colleges
- Look at listings in scholarship books
- Look through our office’s scholarship files for announcements we have received

From national scholarship sources.
- Try a scholarship search at “www.fastweb.com” or other scholarship search programs on the Internet.

From local Scholarship sources.
- Look through our scholarship files for announcements we have received.

Footnotes

1 Rural Kentucky; financial need is prerequisite for admission; no tuition; 1600 students; most students from Appalachia and Kentucky, but also from 40 states and 60 countries.

2 Naval Academy, Maryland; Air Force Academy, Colorado; U.S. Military Academy, New York; Coast Guard Academy, Connecticut; Merchant Marine Academy, New York.

3 SUNY Students spend a year at a participating public university, paying in-state tuition. Visit NSE website: “www.nse.org”

4 You MUST file the FAFSA form to get an unsubsidized Stafford loan.

Loans for parents and students with no “demonstrated financial need” (per the “Federal Methodology”)

Student
- Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan

Parents
- Federal “PLUS” loan or any home equity loan

Will we qualify for need-based aid?
- Search “College Board Expected Family Contribution Calculator” online.
- Visit the financial aid websites of colleges of interest and complete the college’s Net Price Calculator to see how the college might meet your financial needs.

If you are admitted to a college and qualify for need-based aid, you will receive an aid “package” which, we hope, meets your “need.” It may include grant (gift) money and will most likely include some loan and work-study.
Student’s name: _______________________________________________________

Your goal is to find colleges you really like (ones you “like a lot” or “love”) that represent a range of selectivity categories: maybe, likely, very likely, and, if you like, even a few “stretch” or unlikely colleges. And remember: a “very likely” doesn’t count unless you visit the college (they may not take your application seriously if you don’t), and find that you really like the school. If you don’t really like a school, leave it off this list. Finally, make sure to visit all the colleges you’re serious about by summer’s end.

College visits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chances of admission</th>
<th>COLLEGE or UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>Date of Visit</th>
<th>How much do you like the college?</th>
<th>Do you plan to apply?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Likely</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9/10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Likely</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7/10 or 8/10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maybe</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4/10 to 6/10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stretch</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2/10 or 3/10)</td>
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<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unlikely</strong></td>
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<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1/10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love it / like it a lot / like it</td>
<td>Yes / ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TIPS FOR COMPLETING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

The approach you take to your applications makes a big difference to the admission officer. The two most important “watch words” in setting an appropriate tone are honesty and enthusiasm. Be honest about yourself, your accomplishments, and your goals. Show enthusiasm for the college, for your education, for your future. Admission officers will want to admit people who are sincere and enthusiastic. (Conversely, admission officers won’t want to admit [and often don’t admit] people who don’t show sincere and specific interest in the college or who come across as pompous, boastful, generic, insincere or cynical, even when the college would otherwise be considered a “very likely” for the student.) This is an exciting step in your life; it is important to relay this excitement.

- Do a neat and thorough application to show the college that you respect its admission process and care about the college.
- It is very important to put as much care and thought into the “short answers” as you do with the essay. A beautiful essay will “ring hollow” if the short answers aren’t of the same quality.
- The “Why are you applying to this college?” question is extremely important. If your answer could apply to other colleges, it will come across as generic.
- Make sure to work on your writing and your activity section with your college counselor. We are eager to help you with this process.
- Don’t let others over-edit your work; college admission officers read thousands of essays every year, and they know what high school seniors “sound” like in essays. If it sounds like a 45-year-old, it will not serve you well. If it sounds like you, it can serve you well.

The Personal Essay

The Common Application has a hard 650-word limit. Note that you don’t need to write 650 words; anywhere near 450 and upwards may be fine, depending on the topic and how you write. Colleges basically want two things from an essay: they want to know that you can write well, and they want to learn more about who you are and how you think.

The topic: The Common App prompts for the primary “personal essay” are merely suggestions, since there is one prompt that gives you complete freedom in choosing your own topic: “Share an essay on any topic of your choice.” (Keep in mind that when you answer the colleges’ own supplementary essays or short-answer questions it is crucial that you do answer the specific question, but with the main Common App personal essay, the topic is up to you.)

This is not a good place to attempt to “work in” all of your accomplishments. That would be obvious, annoying to the reader, and superfluous. Contrary to the advice in some popular guides, this is not a time to try to be “different” or “stick out” in a way that is unnatural for you; that plan usually backfires. Very few essay topics are original or unique, but how you write about them – your voice – should be. The way to really stick out is by being yourself – by being honest and introspective, by attempting to take a real look at something that means a
lot to you, by eschewing the superficiality that most students think admission officers want to hear. Represent “the real you” on paper and you will “stick out.”

If possible, write about something that really matters to you. It will give the readers a better insight into who you are. It will be less superficial because your feelings about it run deeper. You will be more inclined to care about the essay and do a good job on it. Showing self-awareness and reflection is key to the essay, and writing about something important to you will allow you to do that.

Your essay doesn’t need to show you as perfect, and trying to come across as perfect hints of arrogance. The personal growth one shows in an essay is often the most interesting and attractive part, showing maturity, humility and potential for future growth.

The Writing Process: Always ask yourself “why?” or “so what?” Why does it mean a lot to me? Why do I care? Why is this important? For every statement you make in your essay, ask yourself “why?” Most of the time, the answer will be obvious. Sometimes, the answer will require that you clarify what you’ve written. Once in a while, the answer will open up a completely new vein for you to pursue.

After writing your first draft, put it away for a few days. Then read it aloud. Read it as if you were a third party. Does it sound right to you? Does it make sense? Will it be clear to someone who doesn’t know you? Does it sound honest and thoughtful?

Rewrite it. The best writers are all careful rewriters. Have one or two teachers or other adults read it and ask you questions about it, react to it. Do not let adults rewrite it for you; that is both dishonest and bad strategy. Colleges are on their guard; the essay that sounds like an adult wrote it will not gain you points. A well-written essay that sounds like you will work to your advantage. And, of course, work on it with your college counselor!

Remember to “show,” not just “tell” the reader. “I was nervous about the meeting” isn’t as convincing as, “I woke up around 4:00 a.m. worried about how the meeting would go. Would I make a complete fool of myself or impress everyone with my idea? The stakes seemed high to me, and I had never done anything like this before.”

Telling a meaningful personal story can be a good beginning for an essay. However, the story is only part of the essay. A good rule of thumb is that the story should be no more than half of your essay. The rest should be spent describing the importance of the experience to you, what you’ve learned from it, how it may have changed your opinions, outlook and actions, and perhaps how the lessons you learned might affect your future. You must spell it out for the reader. Don’t put the reader in the position to ask, “so what?” Colleges want to see your self-awareness in your essays.

If you write a more traditional style of essay, keep in mind that, often, your conclusion should not be the same as your introduction. While that may be recommended for an English or
history essay, it often misses an important opportunity in a college application essay. As Sarah Myers McGinty, former Harvard undergraduate writing teacher and widely regarded expert on the college application essay puts it, “A more creative use of the conclusion is as a springboard for a new idea” (The College Application Essay, The College Board, 2004, p. 56). And if the “so what?” question isn’t already addressed in the essay, this is a good place to address it.

Check for grammar, spelling, capitalization and awkward phrasing. These do count; an unpolished essay shows a lack of caring and discipline.

Don’t worry too much about your essay. Work on it because it is important, and it can make a difference, but know that at most colleges, probably about 15% of the essays are very strong, 15% are weak, and the rest are somewhere in that gray area which won’t “make or break” the application. Of course, the more selective the college, the higher the expectations will be. What’s most important is that you’re true to yourself and that you do your level best to take advantage of this opportunity.

Rev 7-19
# Parts of the Application: What Goes Where?

## Everything begins with the STUDENT

### TEACHER RECS

“Invite” & “assign” teachers to each college on the Common Application by mid-September.

Complete Teacher Rec Questionnaire. For non-Common Application colleges, see each college’s instructions.

### APPLICATIONS

Send drafts of all writing to your counselor; make sure we see final drafts at least two weeks before deadline.

Complete and submit the Common App (or other application) online at least one week before the deadline.

### TESTING

When required by the college, send official ACT, SAT and Subject Test score reports four weeks before the application deadline. Find information on sending scores at collegeboard.org (for SATs and Subject Tests) or ACT.org.

### TRANSCRIPT & COUNSELOR REC


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And ends at the COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICE
Procedures for Processing College and Scholarship Applications

TARGET DATES
December 1 is our suggested "target date" for completing all of your regular decision college applications. (ED, EA, and rolling admission schools generally need to be completed earlier than December 1.) Actual deadlines are established by the colleges themselves, but experience has taught us that the senior year is much saner if you aim for this December 1 date for your regular decision applications.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORTS AND COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATIONS
Submit Hackley’s Secondary School Report / Transcript Request Form to Ms. Frasco in person by October 1. For colleges that do not use the Common App, see Ms. Frasco regarding how to handle each specific school.

APPLICATIONS
The vast majority of colleges require that applications be submitted online, using either the Common Application or a school’s own application form. (See Ms. Frasco for specific instructions if one of your schools asks for a paper application submission.)

- Read all application instructions carefully, including instructions for supplements when they are required. This is particularly important for ED and EA applicants, and for students applying for need-based financial aid.
- Know and adhere to all deadlines.
- Print out a hard copy of the “print preview” of your application to proofread before clicking the send tab.

ESSAYS, ETC.
Work on application writing well in advance of due dates. We ask all seniors to work with their college counselor on the following at least two weeks prior to the date the student wants to send in the application:

- Essays
- Short answers
- Extra-curricular grids

While other teachers or advisors may help you with drafts, your college counselor is the expert on this particular form of writing and should be the primary judge of your work.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FORMS
For the Common Application, in the “Recommenders and FERPA” section for a specific college, “invite” your teachers and “assign” them to each of the colleges you will apply to. For non-Common App online recommendations, follow the instructions provided by each school. For the rare paper application, consult with your counselor. Give your teacher as much lead time as possible (NO LESS THAN SIX WEEKS) to complete the recommendation.

Use the same two teachers for all of your college recommendations whenever possible. Be sure to thank your teachers!
STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

You must send your test scores (SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, and sometimes APs) directly to the colleges which require them (Hackley does NOT send test scores to colleges). Many colleges require that you send them through the testing agency (College Board or ACT), but some colleges now allow students to self-report their test scores. If you are applying to such a college, make sure to submit your score(s) in the approved manner (often on the application itself). Be careful to follow each college’s instructions.

You do not need to send scores to colleges that do not require them, though depending on your scores, it may sometimes be advantageous to do so. If you have questions, talk to your college counselor.

SAT / SAT Subject Test / ACT Score Report Procedures

To send official SAT and SAT Subject Test score reports to colleges or scholarship programs, use the SAT Score Sender service at www.collegeboard.com. There is a charge of $12.00 for each report. Scores are then received between one and four weeks later, depending on the college’s score retrieval system.

ACT score reports can be requested at www.actstudent.org. Each score report costs $12.00. Scores are then received between one and four weeks later, depending on the college’s score retrieval system. ACT score reports are separate, not cumulative, so that individual test dates must be selected to be sent to colleges.

When Official Test Scores are Required, Send Scores Early

If you are applying to a school that requires that test scores be sent officially, through the testing agency, you should send your scores as soon as you have them, in the fall of senior year. Make sure to send official test scores at least four weeks before they are due. You do not need to wait until your application has been submitted to send test scores.

If test scores are optional for a school, discuss with your counselor whether or not sending your scores makes sense for that particular school.

Advanced Placement Test Scores

If you have earned a score of “4” or “5” on an AP exam, we generally recommend that you let your colleges know about it. Some colleges will accept self-reported AP scores in the Common App. Others will require official AP scores sent directly from College Board. To send your official AP score report to any college, go online to www.apscore.org. The fee for each standard delivery score report is $15; rush delivery is available for $25 per score report.

Withholding or Cancelling Some AP Scores When Sending Others Officially: Withholding: Students may withhold AP scores they don’t want sent to a college, or colleges, by filling out the “AP Score Withholding Form,” available on the College Board website, and either faxing or mailing it in. There is a per score report fee for this service.

Cancelling: It is possible to permanently cancel scores from your official AP score report by filling out and faxing or mailing the “AP Score Cancellation Form,” available on the College Board website. There is no charge for this service, but note that once a score is cancelled, it can never be reinstated.

Note: Scores of “1” and “2” should be cancelled since these will not earn college credit and are not helpful in the admissions process. We recommend that you consult with your college counselor before cancelling a score of “3”.

Rev 7-8-19
## SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT/TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM

**THIS FORM MUST BE GIVEN TO MS. FRASCO IN PERSON BY OCTOBER 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME of COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>COMMON APP?</th>
<th>APPLICATION TYPE</th>
<th>Exact Due Date</th>
<th>Take the campus tour or plan to by mid-November?</th>
<th>How much do you honestly like this college?</th>
<th>Did you interview for this college?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES NO*</td>
<td>Regular Rolling ED ED2 EA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did you take the campus tour? Yes No If not, plan to by mid-November? Yes No</td>
<td>Love it / Like it a lot / Like it / It's okay</td>
<td>Yes / I plan to / College doesn't offer interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES NO*</td>
<td>Regular Rolling ED ED2 EA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did you take the campus tour? Yes No If not, plan to by mid-November? Yes No</td>
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<td>Love it / Like it a lot / Like it / It's okay</td>
<td>Yes / I plan to / College doesn't offer interviews</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*You must discuss procedures for handling EACH non-Common App school directly with Ms. Frasco.

**StUDENT NAME:**

**COUNSELOR:**

**TODAY'S DATE:**

**RECEIVED:** __________________            ___________________

**DATE INITIALS**

---

Remember to update us with changes or additions after submitting this form. Rev 7/2019
Sending Standardized Test Scores to Colleges

It is the student’s responsibility to send test scores to each college as required by the college or desired by the student. Hackley does not report test scores to colleges on our transcripts.

Does the college require any test scores?

Yes

Does the college require that the scores be sent officially, online (through College Board or ACT)?

Yes

Send the required scores (and any other scores you’d like to send) officially, online.

No

Report the required scores (and any other scores you’d like to send) in a manner prescribed by the college.

No

Are there any scores you would like to send to this college that aren’t required?

Yes

Does the college require that scores be sent officially, online (through College Board or ACT) to consider them in the admissions process?

Yes

Send the desired scores officially, online.

No

Report the desired scores in a manner prescribed by the college.

No
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>College name</th>
<th>ACT(s):</th>
<th>SAT(s):</th>
<th>Subj. Test(s):</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Which date(s)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Official* / On College App. / On college portal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT(s):</td>
<td>SAT(s):</td>
<td>Subj. Test(s):</td>
<td>AP(s):</td>
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<td>Which date(s)?</td>
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<td>Official* / On College App. / On college portal</td>
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</table>

*Officially reported scores are sent online through the College Board (SATs, Subject Tests, APs) or through ACT (ACT). When sending official scores through College Board or ACT, be sure to do so at least four weeks before the college’s application deadline, as it may take that long for scores to reach the colleges.*
**APPLICATION TRACKING SHEET**

**IMPORTANT:** Keep digital or paper copies of everything you send to colleges & to financial aid/ scholarship organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Application Begun?</th>
<th>Completed?</th>
<th>Supplement?</th>
<th>Date sent?*</th>
<th>INTERVIEW Offered?</th>
<th>When/ where?</th>
<th>Deadline?</th>
<th>SAT / ACT SAT Subject Tests (if desired and/or required by school)</th>
<th>AP scores</th>
<th>Items for Counselor Review (at least 2 weeks ahead of app. due date)</th>
<th>Additional materials What materials? Online/not? Date Sent?</th>
<th>Secondary School/ Transcript Form to Ms. Frasco by OCTOBER 1</th>
<th>Financial Aid Which forms required? Date(s) Sent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Tests:</td>
<td>Date Sent:</td>
<td>Method:</td>
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</table>

*Applications to colleges with ROLLING admissions should be completed as early as possible.

**You must give your teachers at least 6-8 weeks' notice before the recommendation letter due date.**
Teacher Recommendations for College Applications

**STEP ONE:**
Find out what your colleges require. Most colleges require two recommendations. Some colleges will require recommendations from teachers in certain subject areas (example: English or science) or grade levels (usually, junior or senior year). Consult your college counselor for his/her advice and approval.

**STEP TWO:**
Once your counselor has approved, approach your teachers, in person, politely. Ask them if they’d be willing to write you a college recommendation. Example: “I know you’re very busy, but I was wondering if you think you might be able to write me a recommendation for colleges.” If the teacher responds positively, then you’re all set. (If the teacher hesitates, you might say, “Think about it, and I’ll get back to you later.” Then, see your college counselor.)

**STEP THREE:**
Once your college counselor has approved and your teacher has agreed to write for you, complete the Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire (available on HOL) and send it to your teacher (and copy your college counselor).

**STEP FOUR:**
FOR COMMON APPLICATIONS, go on-line to your application and, after August 1, “invite” your two teachers to write for you. (See instructions on next page for inviting recommenders to Common App.) After “inviting” them, you’ll need to “assign” each recommender to each college where you want the recommendation to go. Double-check with the teacher to make sure he/she receives your recommendation request via e-mail and make sure the teacher knows your earliest deadline. Make sure you select the decision plan for each of your colleges: ED, EA, or regular. If you don’t select a decision plan, the teachers will not know the deadline for submitting the recommendation. (Note: you can change a decision plan, if necessary, up until you submit your application.)

FOR OTHER TYPES OF ON-LINE RECOMMENDATIONS, follow the instructions of the on-line application(s). Double-check with the teacher to make sure he/she receives your recommendation request via e-mail and make sure the teacher knows the deadline for each on-line recommendation.

**COMPLETE STEPS 1-4 AT LEAST SIX WEEKS BEFORE YOUR EARLIEST APPLICATION DEADLINE.**

Remember: this is not a particularly good time to annoy your teachers.
DO NOT make the teacher track you down for missing information or make the teacher rush off a hastily written recommendation. Be prompt and courteous; your teachers are putting in a lot of extra work, for no extra pay, on your behalf and may have twenty other students’ recommendations to write as well. **Do not badger teachers to submit your recommendations before the official due date.** Trust your teachers to meet their deadlines.

**STEP FIVE:** After the recommendations are done, remember to thank your teachers. They are willing to write for you (putting lots of time and attention into each recommendation) because they care about you, so thank them for their help and let them know how things turn out!

Rev 7/2019
On August 1st, follow these instructions for inviting your college counselor, and, later, your teachers, to write your recommendation:

Log into your Common App account.

If you don’t have any colleges on your account yet, go to “College Search,” enter a college’s name (that’s all you need to enter) and click the search button. Then, click the box next to the college name, and click the “add” button.

Go to “Dashboard” and click on a college name.

Click next to “Recommenders and FERPA” where it says “Incomplete.”

Click on “FERPA Release Authorization.”

Read this section carefully, then click on the box next to “I have fully read and understood the FERPA Release Authorization explanation above” and click continue.

Click on the box next to “I authorize every school that I have attended to release all records…”

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure to select, “I waive my right to review all recommendations…”

You’re waiving this right for the reasons we discussed in our Common App workshop. Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which reassures colleges that the letters are candid and truthful. Since Hackley’s teachers and counselors write very strong recommendations, you’d be undermining their value to colleges by not waiving your right. Many recommenders prefer not to write letters for students who don’t waive this right. If you feel uncomfortable waiving your right, speak to your parents and to your college counselor.

Click on the box next to “I understand that my waiver or no waiver selection above pertains to all colleges…”

Sign in the box (type your signature), select today’s date, and click “Save”

Go to “Invite Recommenders” and click on “Invite and Manage Recommenders.” For “Type” select “counselor”

Enter the appropriate information for your college counselor (triple-check every letter of the e-mail address):

- Mr. Peter Latson   platson@hackleyschool.org
- Ms. Jean Nadell   jnadell@hackleyschool.org
- Ms. Rebecca Hall   rhall@hackleyschool.org

Click “Send Invite” (note that when inviting teachers, the button to click will say “Add Recommender”)

Next, if you have already cleared a teacher rec choice with your counselor, asked the teacher to write for you, and sent the completed Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire to your teacher and counselor, you should “invite” the teacher to write for you:

Click on “Invite and Manage Recommenders”, add the teacher’s information (triple check the e-mail address), and invite (“add”) the teacher. Check with the teacher to see if he/she received the invitation. After you’ve “invited” your teachers to write for you, you’ll need to “assign” them to each of the colleges where you want the recommendation to go.

**IMPORTANT:** Please DO NOT select “Advisor” or “Other Recommender” to write for you. We will discuss these two options with you during the first week of school.
Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire  Rev 7/2019

Student: ___________________________________  Teacher:___________________________________

Students:
1. Speak to your college counselor before asking the above teacher to write for you.
2. Ask your teacher, in person, if he/she would be willing to write for you.
3. Fill out this form (by hand or in Word) and give it to your teacher; give a copy to your counselor.

Your responses below will help your teacher write a more thorough and supportive recommendation. Specific anecdotes and recollections are particularly helpful, as we old folks are losing our memories at an alarming rate! We know you probably had a wonderful experience in this class, but remember that the focus of this questionnaire is you, not your teacher. Please address your achievements, growth, and enthusiasm, rather than spend your time heaping praise upon the teacher. Do not be modest! Don’t make stuff up (☺), but be proud. Do a good job, and you’ll help us sing your praises!

Describe your greatest achievements in this teacher’s class(es) and the abilities you demonstrated of which you are proudest. (Please be as specific as you can.)

What were your most important contributions to this class?

Describe one or two of the most fun or meaningful experiences, units, classroom conversations, anecdotes, recollections, projects, or events you experienced in this teacher’s class(es) that you may remember in five years. What makes it/them so valuable/fun/memorable? How does this reflect your own personality/preferences/goals?
What did you gain from this teacher’s class(es) (including new attitudes, interests, study habits, skills, etc.)?

Please describe your biggest challenge in this course. How did you overcome it?

Does this course/discipline relate to your future academic or career goals? If so, how?

Envision your teacher speaking to a college professor. What would your teacher say to get the professor psyched about having you in class?

Write your own one-sentence teacher recommendation for yourself that makes clear to a college the most important reason it should accept you:

Once you’ve finished answering these questions, give the form to your teacher and give a copy to your counselor.

Use the space below for any additional comments.
Each fall, over one hundred colleges and universities visit Hackley to talk to prospective students and our college counseling staff. These visits are important for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Seniors can demonstrate their interest in a college by attending its session and asking good, informed questions about the college. Failure to have good questions ready can leave a negative impression.
- College representatives provide important information about their programs and selection processes.

Traditionally, seniors have been allowed to attend these sessions if

- they have a free period at the time of the meeting, and bring the permission form below

**OR** they meet all of the following criteria:

- they are serious about considering applying to the college,
- they request and receive their teacher’s permission, on the form below, to miss part or all of a class to attend the meeting,
- they receive this permission at least a few days in advance (visits to Hackley are usually scheduled weeks in advance and a schedule of future visits is posted on the Upper School bulletin board, on the College Counseling Office door, and on our website), and
- they bring the signed permission form to the meeting.

If, however, the college session occurs during a test, or if the teacher decides against granting permission for other reasons, the student should write a short note for the college counseling office to give to the college representative. In the note, the student can voice enthusiasm for the college, disappointment at missing the college session, the reason they can’t attend, and if they either have visited or plan to visit the college campus.

Permission forms (sample below) are REQUIRED for admission to the college sessions:

---

**College Session Attendance Permission Form**

Name of senior: ____________________________

College: ___________________ Date of session: ___________ Time of session: ___________

☐ I will not miss any class or study hall to attend this college session.

☐ I will miss the following class or study hall on the date & time listed above:

Class: ____________________________ Teacher: ____________________________

Teacher’s Permission

I give my permission for this senior to miss my class during the time listed above. I understand our general criteria for giving such permission:

- the student has asked for permission at least a few days in advance of the meeting
- the student will not miss a test

Teacher’s signature: ____________________________ Date: ________

*You must bring this form with you to be admitted to the college session.*
Visiting College Campuses During the Fall of Senior Year

Hackley discourages seniors from missing school. With the heavy workload, extracurricular commitments and college applications to complete, it is hard enough to juggle one’s obligations without missing school. At the same time, Hackley recognizes that there are circumstances when missing school to visit colleges during senior year is unavoidable: an important athletic recruitment visit, a musical or theatrical audition, or perhaps a last minute re-visit to confirm an ED commitment.

When the need arises to visit a college during the fall, seniors should first consider whether they can schedule the visit during one of the days when Hackley is not in session:

- September 23: Senior College Visit Day (no classes for seniors)
- September 30: Rosh Hashana (for those who don’t observe the holiday)
- October 9: Yom Kippur (for those who don’t observe the holiday)
- October 14: Columbus Day
- November 11: Faculty professional development (no classes)

If none of those dates work, and if a Saturday morning visit does not work out (college admissions offices are often open Saturday mornings in the fall), then the senior should see his or her college counselor about alternatives and perhaps consider the possibility of missing school. The counselor may then sign the form below and initiate the permission process. It is important that the student have the form signed by all of the teachers of the classes the student will be missing, at least one week before the visit date.

---

**College Campus Visit Pass – Due One Week Before You Miss School**

Name: __________________________________________ Date____________________________

College(s) to be visited:____________________________________________________________________________________

Which school day (specific date) will be missed:_______________________________________________________________

**Required Signatures** (College Counselor must sign first):

- College Counselor Signature:_________________________________________
- Advisor Signature:___________________________________________________
- Parent Signature:____________________________________________________

Signature of teachers/coaches/P.E. teachers/play directors/etc. of classes and extracurricular commitments to be missed*:

---

*Please notify your private music instructor, and/or others as appropriate.

Return completed pass to Ms. Frasco in the College Counseling Office one week before you leave to visit the college.
College Campus Visit Pass - Due One Week Before You Miss School

Name: ___________________________________________ Date __________________

College(s) to be visited: _________________________________________________

Which school day (specific date) will be missed: _____________________________

Required Signatures (College Counselor must sign first):

College Counselor Signature: ____________________________________________
Advisor Signature: _____________________________________________________
Parent Signature: ______________________________________________________

Signature of teachers/coaches/P.E. teachers/play directors/etc. of classes and extracurricular commitments to be missed*:

DO NOT SIGN UNTIL COLLEGE COUNSELOR HAS SIGNED ABOVE

_________________________________________ _______________________________
_________________________________________ _______________________________
_________________________________________ _______________________________

Attendance Office Signature (Ms. Coy):

*Please notify your private music instructor, and/or others as appropriate.

Return completed pass to Ms. Frasco in the College Counseling Office one week before you leave to visit the college.

_________________________________________ _______________________________
_________________________________________ _______________________________
_________________________________________ _______________________________

College Campus Visit Pass - Due One Week Before You Miss School

Name: ___________________________________________ Date __________________

College(s) to be visited: _________________________________________________

Which school day (specific date) will be missed: _____________________________

Required Signatures (College Counselor must sign first):

College Counselor Signature: ____________________________________________
Advisor Signature: _____________________________________________________
Parent Signature: ______________________________________________________

Signature of teachers/coaches/P.E. teachers/play directors/etc. of classes and extracurricular commitments to be missed*:

DO NOT SIGN UNTIL COLLEGE COUNSELOR HAS SIGNED ABOVE

_________________________________________ _______________________________
_________________________________________ _______________________________
_________________________________________ _______________________________

Attendance Office Signature (Ms. Coy):

*Please notify your private music instructor, and/or others as appropriate.

Return completed pass to Ms. Frasco in the College Counseling Office one week before you leave to visit the college.