WHAT ABOUT COLLEGE?

INFORMATION FOR HACKLEY’S NINTH- AND TENTH-GRADERS

As a freshman or sophomore, you have the bulk of your high school career in front of you; college is a long way off! At this age, you should focus on getting the most out of high school, not only as a prelude to college, but in order to develop both as a student and as a person.

That said, we have found that having some general information regarding the college selection process can be both helpful and comforting in these early years. Often students and parents will ask us “what should we be doing about college?” We will tell you what you should be doing (a rather short list), but we will also tell you what you don’t need to be doing now – what you don’t need to worry about.

C.A.T.S.

Curriculum, Activities, Testing, Socialization

A fellow counselor introduced us to the acronym “CATS,” which he uses to help 9th- and 10th-graders remember what they need to be thinking about regarding the college admission process.

C = Curriculum
- Take appropriately challenging courses.
- Establish strong study habits and time management techniques.
- Put forth your best effort; this will give you appropriate college options later on.
- Your performance in 9th and 10th grades will determine your course options down the line, and colleges do care which courses you take as a junior and senior.
- Seek help early from your teacher/advisor if you are struggling with a subject.
- Participate in class discussions and activities; become an active learner.
A = Activities
- Consider volunteering and get involved in sports or other activities.
- Sample a number of activities.
- Pick at least one or two activities you plan to continue for four years.
- You are much more likely to stick with activities you enjoy; do not pick an activity because you think it will “look good” to a college. Colleges do not have “favorite” activities.
- Do not sacrifice depth for breadth. Commitment to, and leadership in, a few activities is much more important than a long list of activities in which you have less interest or involvement.

T = Testing
- There are some sophomores, and even an occasional freshman, who might take one or two SAT Subject Tests in June. The college counseling office will be in touch about these tests in February. In the meantime, take a look at the freshman/sophomore testing information in this pamphlet.

S = Socialization
- Every member of a community plays a unique role and gains a reputation over time. It is not too early to take inventory of yourself and ask yourself a few important questions:
  - What kind of person do I want to be?
  - How do I want my friends to see me?
  - How do I want my teachers to see me?
  - What role will I play at Hackley?
  - How will I contribute to Hackley?
  - How will I grow as an individual?
  - Am I learning what it means to do my best?
  - Am I the kind of student, friend, teammate, or classmate I would hope to have?

Seem pretty straightforward? It is! The secret to getting ready for the college process is simply being the best high school student and community member you can be. Still, students and parents often have specific questions before junior year. In the next few pages we will try to answer some of the more common questions we hear regarding the college process. If after reading this brochure you’re curious and would like to read more, feel free to visit our web site on HOL (after logging in, click on “Resources,” and then on the “College Counseling” tab).
HOW OUR OFFICE WILL HELP YOU

**Helping you prepare**
The first step in the college process has nothing to do with college; it has to do with you. Before you can apply to college, you have to become the candidate you want to be. (See C.A.T.S. on first two pages.) We are here to answer your questions and provide guidance for you and your parents whenever you think it may be helpful.

**Helping you understand your options**
In junior year, we’ll talk a lot about the college landscape and suggest specific colleges to help you achieve your goals. We’ll help you refine your search as you visit colleges and consider your options, and we’ll help you strategize in creating a final, balanced college list. In the meantime, sophomores & their parents can take a look on HOL, where we have compiled admissions data for Hackley graduates (log in and go to the Advisory section). While it is too early to define what type of college you want to go to, you may find it interesting to get a sense of the academic expectations of some of the colleges Hackley students often consider.

**Helping you present yourself to colleges**
Besides helping you choose courses and plan a standardized testing schedule, we will teach you how to present yourself to colleges, in person and in writing. We will show you how to prepare for a college interview, and you’ll do a mock interview with your counselor before you interview at a college. We’ll counsel you on how to put your best foot forward in the fall of senior year, when some 120-130 colleges come to visit Hackley. We’ll help you with your college essays and counsel you on how to show your strengths through the application process. We’ll hold a workshop on how to complete the Common Application, and we’ll review your written work before you push “submit.” We’ll help you choose your teacher-recommenders and write our own supportive recommendation as well. We’ll also be at work behind the scenes, speaking to college admissions officers about Hackley and about our candidates for admission. And, of course, we’ll always be there to answer the many questions that arise during the application process.

**Helping you to stay sane and keep your perspective**
While Hackley is a demanding school with high-achieving students, we do things a little differently: we celebrate learning, personal growth, friendship, community, and the “college fit” rather than our “college list.” We prepare our students to maximize their college options, but that is not our most important goal; we believe it is more important that Hackley’s diverse and enthusiastic students all find colleges that “fit” them – schools where they are most likely to reach their full potential academically and personally, and where they are likely to find a happy home away from home.
THE COLLEGE TIMELINE

Freshman Year

- Establish good study habits. Learn to work hard and take pride in your work. If you do your level best in high school, you’ll have appropriate college options later on. If you don’t, you may not have options that fit you as well. Remember also that how you do in ninth and tenth grades will help determine your course options as a junior and senior.
- Get involved. Find a few activities that you can really put your heart into. You may try some new things in high school, but eventually colleges will want to see depth over breadth in your activities. Pick activities that you really like, so you’ll enjoy them and get more out of them. These could include sports, music, theater, publications, service, activism, hobbies – anything – at Hackley or in your community.
- If you’re a top-notch athlete, read our “Guide for the Prospective College Athletic Recruit” (available on HOL; log in, click on “Resources”, then “College Counseling”). Share this guide with your parents. Speak to your coaches, and consider summer training camps.
- If you’re taking AP language or Advanced Pre-Calculus, come see us in February about taking an SAT Subject Test in June.

Sophomore Year

- Continue to do your best in your courses.
- Deepen your involvement in the activities you’ve chosen to continue from freshman year.
- If you’re a serious athlete and want to consider playing sports in college, make sure you read our “Guide for the Prospective College Athletic Recruit” early in the fall. Share it with your folks and speak with your coaches.
- Look on the next page for advice about any SAT Subject Tests you might take in June. Most sophomores don’t take any, but some should.
- When it comes time to choose courses for junior year, make a two-year (junior and senior year) plan with your advisor, and feel free to stop by our offices to speak with your college counselor (assigned during the winter) about how your plan looks from a college admissions point of view.
- If you’re expecting a busy junior year, you may want to consider doing some SAT or ACT test prep during the summer before junior year. If you’d prefer to wait, that’s perfectly fine as well. The goal is to prepare to take the ACT or SAT in December of junior year.
- There’s no need to visit colleges this summer, unless you (the student) are very eager to do so. If you are, come see us for a few suggestions. Otherwise, use this summer as you choose, considering personal growth and/or nurturing your intellectual or other interests.

(If you’re curious and want to see the junior and senior timelines, log into hackleyschool.org and click on Resources, then on College Counseling.)
SAT Subject Test Advice for 9s and 10s

If you are currently enrolled in ...

- Advanced Algebra 2 with Trigonometry (Math 303)
- Advanced Pre-Calculus (Math 305)
- AP Spanish, French or Latin and you plan on discontinuing your language study (this is against our general advice)
- Accelerated Chemistry and you have a strong interest in science or engineering, but are not taking AP Chemistry in 11th grade

And your grade is ...

- ≥ B
- ≥ B-
- ≥ B-
- ≥ B+

Your next step is...

- Wait until next year to consider taking the Math 2 Subject Test after taking Pre-Calculus.
- Consider taking the Math 2 Subject Test
- Consider taking the Spanish, French or Latin Subject Test
- Consider taking the Chemistry Subject Test

Please see below for general information and recommendations regarding SAT Subject Tests
Some general notes on SAT Subject Tests:

- The tests last one hour, and are **not** offered at Hackley.
- Register for the tests at least 6-8 weeks in advance at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and use Hackley’s CEEB code (335540).
- 9th- and 10th-graders taking these tests should register for the June offering of the test so that they complete the year’s curriculum before taking the test(s).
- Because some colleges require that you report **all** of your SAT and SAT Subject Test Scores, you should **always take a practice test** online or by using a book (*The Official Study Guide for ALL SAT Subject Tests* put out by the College Board is a good one).
- Hackley’s ninth-grade Physics and tenth-grade regular Chemistry courses are **not** designed to prepare students for the Physics or Chemistry Subject Tests.
- Hackley’s tenth-grade U.S. History through 1900 course **does not** cover the material necessary for the US History Subject Test (40% of the exam pertains to the 20th Century, which juniors study).
- Only ten colleges in the United States require SAT Subject Tests for admission, and two of them will allow you to waive that requirement by taking the ACT instead of the SAT.
- **The following list, updated in December 2017, is subject to change:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Subject Test(s) Required</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cal Tech</td>
<td>Math II plus either Physics, Chem, or Bio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon - Business</td>
<td>Math II + 1 other (science preferred)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon - Engineering</td>
<td>Math II plus either Physics or Chem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon - Fine Arts</td>
<td>ARCHITECTURE ONLY: Math I or II plus either Chem or Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon - Humanities</td>
<td>Math I or II + 1 other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon – Info Systems</td>
<td>Math I or II + 1 other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell - Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>Any 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell - Engineering</td>
<td>Math I or II plus either Physics, Chem, or Bio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke*</td>
<td>Any 2 <em>(if not taking the ACT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown*</td>
<td>3 with breadth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard*</td>
<td>Any 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey Mudd</td>
<td>Math II + 1 other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGill (Canada)</td>
<td>Any 2 <em>(if not taking the ACT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>Math I or II plus either Physics, Chem, or Bio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufts - Engineering</td>
<td>Math I or II plus either Physics or Chem <em>(if not taking the ACT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufts - Math/Science major</td>
<td>Math I or II plus either Physics, Chem, or Bio <em>(if not taking the ACT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufts - Non-math/science major</td>
<td>Math I or II plus either Physics or Chem <em>(if not taking the ACT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb Institute (Naval Arch. &amp; Marine Engineering)</td>
<td>Math I or II plus either Physics or Chem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* While not absolutely required, Subject Tests are so strongly recommended by this college as to represent a *de facto* requirement and their absence would have to be justified as a special circumstance.
Frequently Asked Questions

What do colleges want to see in their applicants?
- High school courses that challenge the student appropriately
- Grades that represent the student’s best effort
- Good scores on standardized tests, if required (“good” depends on the college)
- Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative
- Special talents or life experiences that contribute to a well-rounded student body
- Experiences that demonstrate responsibility, initiative, dedication, and/or the development of areas of academic interest or expertise
- Students who have done a thoughtful college search, know the college well, and communicate their “fit” for the college in their applications and interviews
- Students who have developed and can express a “passion” for certain academic subjects

Which test should I take – the SAT or the ACT?
Colleges have no preference for one test over the other so the best plan is to try them both and pick the one that feels most comfortable to you. Hackley offers the Pre-ACT to all sophomores in February and the PSAT 10 to all sophomores in March. These preliminary tests are intended to help sophomores decide which of the two tests they prefer, and to do so in time for those who might like to do a little test preparation during the summer before their junior year. The PSAT 10 and the Pre-ACT are not official tests; scores count for nothing and are not sent to colleges. The sole purpose of the two tests is to help sophomores decide which one to focus on going forward.

What should I do during the summers?
You should do what is most rewarding and produces the most growth, without regard to college. It is rare for summer activities to have a significant, direct effect on an admission decision (unless you compete in the Olympics or publish original research in a scholarly journal!), so you should decide based on the intrinsic value of the activity. If you have a special talent or interest and want to pursue it, that’s often a very good idea. Colleges often want to see applicants who have developed strong interests in academic and extracurricular activities, and the summer offers you the time to develop those interests, if appropriate. If you want to try something new, that’s great, too. If you simply want to go to camp, or work, or play tennis and loaf around, that’s also fine, as long as you and your parents feel it’s a worthwhile experience.

Is it a good idea to visit colleges before the junior year?
We generally recommend against early college visits, unless a student is really eager to visit campuses, or the student is already being recruited by college coaches. Usually, however, it’s the parent who’s eager, while the child is neutral at best. There are risks involved in visiting early, including
- Looking at inappropriate colleges and establishing spoken or unspoken expectations that are out of line with reality
- Starting the process based on a parental timeline, before the student is ready
- Establishing feelings one way or the other about a college based on a superficial inspection or immature criteria

Michael Thompson, a nationally recognized leader in counseling, is quoted in the Lawlor Review (Fall 2003) on this subject: “I absolutely object to people visiting college campuses between
sophomore and junior year. That’s not where kids’ minds are. They need to be having a first
summer job or be at an exciting trip camp. It is adults who push a relentless future orientation
onto kids, without regard to their development.”

When will we start meeting with college counselors?
While we are happy to entertain questions or concerns at any time, we reach out to parents at
various points throughout the high school years:
• Freshman Parents College Evening (February)
• Sophomore Parents College Evening (February)
• First-time Junior Parents College Evening (early October)
• Junior College Night (January)
• Initial family meetings (student plus at least one parent)
• Senior Parent College Evening (early September)
• Many ad hoc conversations with parents throughout the process

We reach out occasionally to freshmen and sophomores, but the process begins in earnest for
students during their junior year:
• Introduction to College class (required for all juniors)
• Junior College Night (January)
• Initial family meetings (January)
• Spring follow-up meeting (April)
• Mock interview (May)
• Common Application Workshop (June)
• Senior Fall Follow-up meeting (September)
• And a thousand-and-one ad hoc meetings with students throughout the process

We’ll be in touch more often when you’re a junior. For now, make the most of all that Hackley
has to offer!