



THE ORME SCHOOL
Excellence. Tradition. Character.

College Counseling Handbook

***For Students and Parents
2024–2025***

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INTRODUCTION

At The Orme School, college preparation begins the moment a student walks through our doors. We challenge our students and help them to grow intellectually, and we provide them with an array of activities, from the arts and athletics to clubs and service opportunities that encourage them to develop their interests and talents and pursue their passions. Parents who are concerned that their children are not starting early enough in the college selection process should be assured that our students are very much involved in the process of preparing for their futures through their every participation in the Orme experience. To be ready for the college selection process, students in eighth through tenth grades should seek challenges, work hard at their studies, pursue their interests, and enjoy themselves!

College and Career Counseling at The Orme School

The formal college counseling process at The Orme School begins in the junior year when students take an in-depth aptitude test provided by the Career Vision organization. For more information on this program of testing, go to their website, <https://careervision.org/>. This is a service provided to our junior class, with no charge to the family.

Once the test results are available, each junior will meet with the College Counselor for a session dedicated to exploring the different types of careers and applicable majors identified for that student. This meeting is only a starting point on learning more about the workplace, how to establish criteria in decision making, and what the many possibilities for their future are. We believe that to be successful in a career, you must be happy in that career, and that this begins with choosing the right school with the right majors.

Juniors will meet with the Counselor once a week during the second semester to discuss the student's goals and aspirations, and to begin an ongoing dialogue. A list of colleges suitable for preliminary investigation will be developed during these meetings. Students fill out questionnaires that give the College Counselor valuable information about what they are looking for in a college. Even more importantly, Juniors are asked to research and come to an understanding of what will put them on a happy and successful post-high school journey.

By the end of their junior year, some students should have a good idea about the type of college or university that interests them, and may already have started a preliminary college list. Other students have just begun thinking about college. This is perfectly natural. The College Counselor is happy to assist students at all stages of the selection process to identify colleges that would be good matches for their interests, abilities, and preferences. The College Counselor will provide and guide students to the many resources available.

The College Counselor at The Orme School works with each student to create a list of college choices and makes suggestions that grow from their accumulated experience with the colleges, and from their personal knowledge of each student. Counselors visit colleges where possible throughout the country to best advise our students. College admission representatives visit and hold information sessions in the fall. Colleges recognize our program as truly personal as well as professional.

With a small number of students, the College Counselor provides individual support throughout the senior year. Seniors meet with the Counselor two times a week during their Chores period. Once a week the Counselor hosts a "College Lounge" where students can come to the college meeting room and work with their peers in a relaxing, productive atmosphere. The Counselor writes a Counselor Evaluation for each senior, and manages all necessary documents that are to be submitted to colleges. The College Counselor is available for meetings with parents by telephone, Zoom, or email.

Independent Counselors—A Note to Parents

Some families choose to hire outside counselors to assist in their student's college selection and application process. Parents sometimes feel that additional support for their son or daughter is necessary. We are confident that Orme students already receive the most comprehensive, high-quality counseling available, and we caution those who do employ independent counselors to be aware of the pitfalls of working with someone outside of the school. Though we do not question the integrity or good intentions of independent counselors, the quality of their advising varies greatly, and counselors who take over the application process for students are inhibiting the important process of high school seniors taking responsibility for their own decisions, choices, and actions. It is not uncommon for independent counselors to compile unrealistic lists of colleges for students, or to edit their essays so heavily that the writing no longer truly conveys the student's individual voice. Orme's College Counselor has worked and lived with your student, and knows them in a way that an outside counselor cannot. We do, however, respect a family's prerogative to make this decision. **If a student is using an independent counselor, we ask that he or she inform The Orme School Director of College Counseling so that we can attempt to coordinate our efforts. Failure to have a coordinated effort could cause inconsistencies that may negatively affect acceptance.**

Standardized Testing

The most important part of a student's application to college is not his or her standardized test scores. More and more colleges are using a holistic approach to admissions. They want to know who they are admitting and what that person will bring to their community, more than numbers or scores. College admissions officers unanimously cite the high school transcript as the most telling piece of the college application. The courses a student takes and his or her performance in those courses is the best predictor of how a student will perform in college. Also, **standardized tests do not** measure motivation, creativity, artistic skills, kindness, decency, sense of humor, enthusiasm, warmth, or resourcefulness – all of which matter to colleges.

While the importance of standardized test scores in college admissions decisions varies, colleges and universities who require standardized test scores may refer to national standardized test results to aid them in comparing applicants. Because applicants come from a wide variety of secondary schools, some colleges need a way to measure academic potential that is more uniform than the high school transcripts they receive. A student with modest scores may be admitted to a highly selective college if his or her application shows some remarkable strength that offsets the testing, such as outstanding artistic or athletic abilities, leadership, research, or community service.

Standardized Testing 2024–2025

During the pandemic era, national test center closures and thousands of subsequent test cancellations sparked national conversations amongst educational analysts, leaders in colleges and secondary schools, and families on the validity of testing and whether testing was ethical and/or equitable. Many leaders in higher education turned to the trend of college admission becoming "test optional" or "test blind." For the most part, those policies currently remain in effect. There are schools, including those in the California State system, which will not accept or consider SAT scores. Other schools use them only for merit scholarships.

In the 2024–2025 admissions cycle, the vast majority of schools remain test optional, but we at Orme encourage students to take a standardized test at least twice in their high school career, when appropriate. **To view a regularly updated list of colleges who are continuing a "test optional" policy, visit <https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>.**

Fees

When students register for SAT and/or ACT tests online, and when they apply to colleges online, it is necessary to pay the registration fees by credit card. We highly recommend that you supply your child

with a credit card number to use for this purpose. If you do not feel comfortable doing that, it is also possible to send card numbers to Orme College Counseling, where they will be kept in a locked file until needed for registration and/or college application purposes. Registration for these tests is the student's responsibility, but we are always available to help.

The PSAT

Juniors take the PSAT in October. Sophomores are also invited to take the test as an opportunity for academic assessment. However, some of the test material, particularly in the Math section, may be new to sophomores, so their scores are not considered indicative of how they will do on the actual SAT. Juniors use their PSAT results to help them identify weak areas and to prepare for the SAT in the spring. Colleges never see these scores, but the juniors' test results are used by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation to select students who qualify to apply for National Merit Scholarships.

Preparation booklets are distributed to students before the test, and by organizations such as College Board, and Kahn Academy. **Students who take the PSAT will be billed for the fee incurred.**

The SAT

The SAT is administered at The Orme School four times a year and consists of two sections: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (reading test, and writing and language test), and Math. Each section is scored on a 200-800 scale. Because there are two sections, composite scores range from 400-1600. When a student first registers for the SAT, a score bank is created in which his or her scores are "deposited" every time the test is taken. Under the Score Choice Plan, students may now decide which scores to send to colleges, although a few colleges still require all scores to be sent. Most colleges take the student's highest scores for evaluation.

Students register for the SAT test online via collegeboard.org independently or during their college counseling meetings. Please allow a half hour to start and complete the registration process. The first available recommended test for juniors is administered in March. The test can be repeated again in the fall of senior year if desired, as well as the spring. **Note: A credit card number is required to register!** Seniors register for the SAT tests through their own College Board Accounts.

The ACT

The ACT is an alternate national standardized test accepted by most colleges and universities in place of the SAT. **The ACT is not offered at The Orme School, but it is offered at other locations in April, June, July, September, October, December, and February.** Registration and preparation materials for the ACT are available online at www.actstudent.org.

SAT Preparation

There are measures that can be taken to improve SAT scores, but it is important to keep standardized tests in perspective. Students should first and foremost concentrate on learning as much as they can from their classes. **Coached students are only slightly more likely to have large score gains than un-coached students.** In addition, about one-third of students experience no score gain or score loss following coaching. Understanding the nature of the test and working through sample questions do help, though, and this type of test preparation is included in courses.

On the Internet, free SAT and ACT prep tutorials can be found at www.number2.com, www.testprepreview.com, and the College Board and ACT websites offer sample questions and test taking tips. College Board has partnered with **Khan Academy**, offering world-class SAT practice, entirely for free. This is a great resource for students to utilize. We recognize also that some students benefit from the structure of an SAT Prep course or the individual attention of a private tutor. We do wish, however, to encourage our students to spend their time wisely and to avoid becoming overbooked and overly stressed by focusing too heavily on improving their standardized test scores. **High scores do not guarantee entry to competitive colleges, and the pursuit of them can detract**

from the very qualities that colleges wish to see in their applicants: intellectual curiosity, a willingness to take risks, a passion for interests beyond the academic setting, and a zest for life.

You are encouraged to explore more at the College Board website:

<https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration>.

Non-Standard/Extended Time Testing

Students with documented learning disabilities or physical handicaps may be eligible to take SAT and ACT tests with special accommodations such as large print type, audio recordings of test questions, or extended time. There are stringent requirements to qualify for special accommodation. Students must have professional documentation of their disability on file with the Academic Resource Center Director at The Orme School, updated within the past three years. For further information, contact the College Counselor as soon as possible as College Board's **Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)** Committee will take approximately seven weeks to render a decision once the application has been submitted by the Orme SSD Coordinator and/or Academic Resource Center Director.

2024–2025 SAT Test Schedule

Test Date	Test	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline*
August 24, 2024	SAT	August 9	August 13
October 5, 2024	SAT**	September 20	September 24
November 2, 2024	SAT**	October 18	October 22
December 7, 2024	SAT	November 22	November 26
March 8, 2025	SAT**	February 21	February 25
May 3, 2025	SAT**	April 18	April 22
June 7, 2025	SAT	May 22	May 27

* **Note that late registration involves an additional fee.**

** **Test administered at The Orme School. ACT tests are not administered at The Orme School, but can be registered for at [ACT.org](https://act.org).**

2024–2025 Test Fees

SAT: \$68.00

SAT Late Registration Fee: \$30.00

For more information on The Orme School testing dates and process, please email Test Coordinator, Alex deBeus at adebeus@ormeschool.org.

The College Selection Process

Using the Internet

To identify colleges of interest, the Internet is your most useful resource. Each student's Scoir account offers search programs that allow students to indicate preferences and then suggest specific colleges that meet the individualized criteria. (A word of advice: It is best to start with very general criteria with these programs – location and size, for instance – and then become gradually more specific.

The Internet can also be valuable in researching specific colleges. Many college websites include “virtual tours” that provide a glimpse of the campus and environments, and all college websites include information about their individual admissions requirements and deadlines. Students are encouraged to use Google or other search engines to explore colleges or questions they might have.

Other suggested Internet college search sites are:

-) collegeboard.org
-) niche.com
-) nacacnet.org
-) collegedata.com
-) usnews.com
-) ecampustours.com
-) www.princetonreview.com
-) <https://collegestats.org/>
-) www.collegeconfidential.com
-) collegeessayguy.com

Additional Search Resources:

<http://edonline.com/cq/hbcu> is the website of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

<https://www.hacu.net/hacu/default.asp> is the website for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

www.catholiccollegesonline.org is the website of the National Catholic College Admission Association.

www.hillel.org is the website of Hillel – The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

<https://www.collegechoice.net/college-life/resources-for-lgbtq-students/> provides links to college and university Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Allies web sites.

For those interested in exploring Canadian colleges, Study In Canada's site is a great place to start:

<https://www.studyincanada.com/>

College Guidebooks

While a wide variety of college guidebooks are available, along with course catalogs from individual colleges, most of today's college research is done online to provide the most current information.

Categorizing Colleges

When building a preliminary college list and identifying colleges to visit, it is helpful for students to categorize colleges according to their own criteria. The College Counselor assists with this beginning with a Career Vision meeting. Besides looking for colleges that are the size you prefer in a desirable location, it is important to determine if a student is a realistic candidate for a given school. When gathering information about colleges, students should note the SAT or ACT “score ranges” that successful applicants fall into, and the percentage of applicants typically accepted. The “Big Future” section of the College Board website is a great resource. For the purpose of categorizing colleges for individual students, we use the terms “reach,” “realistic,” and “safe.”

Paying for College

College Costs

The cost of attending a college or university includes tuition, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation expenses to and from the college campus. Colleges are required to provide a net price calculator on their site.

Talking to your child about financial matters may not be a comfortable conversation, but it is a necessary one. Students need to be aware of what their “budget” will be in two areas: application fees and college costs.

Application fees can be anywhere from no fee, to \$100. Your child will need a credit card for those fees, and should know how much parents are willing to spend on applications. Fee waivers are very limited, and families must meet certain criteria. If you feel you may qualify for a fee waiver, please contact the College Counseling office.

Depending on **Financial Aid** is a risky proposition, and we would like to create a second category of “reach,” “realistic,” and “safe,” for the financial side as well. Students need to include schools that are affordable without or with very little aid.

It’s important to remember that **housing costs** are a more concrete charge for most colleges, and merit and other scholarships may not include that expense. The average cost in 2023 was \$11,500 – \$13,000 a year. Many colleges require freshmen to live on campus.

Financial Assistance

There are several types of financial assistance available for entering college students: scholarships, need-based financial aid, merit based financial aid, and loans.

Financial Aid: Financial Aid is money given based on need. "Need" is computed by the federal government using a form called the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), available online on October 1. The sooner the FAFSA is submitted, the sooner you will get a picture of what your basic financial assistance will be. **ONLY U.S. CITIZENS WITH A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER CAN USE THE FAFSA.**

Some private colleges and universities also use a form called the CSS PROFILE, processed by CSS (College Scholarship Service) and available in September. Many colleges depend on information from the CSS PROFILE to compile financial aid awards for students who are applying for early decision or early action. Some colleges require that the FAFSA form be filed by all students requesting aid of any type, merit-based as well as need-based. Individual colleges and universities will inform applicants of their requirements. The CSS PROFILE can be found at collegeboard.org, and the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

International students are required to fill out different financial forms by each college. Many require the CSS, but all will need proof of funding for their Visa.

If submitting a FAFSA or CSS, they must be filled out by the student and their parents, as they contain confidential financial information, including tax records.

When information from the FAFSA or CSS PROFILE is sent to colleges (results are sent directly from the federal government or the College Scholarship Service), each college then "packages" a financial aid offer based on the total cost of attending the college, minus the figure calculated as the amount that a family is expected to be able to contribute (Estimated Financial Contribution or EFC).

Need-based financial aid packages typically consist of the following three elements:

1. **Grants** – Money awarded by the college or university that does not have to be repaid.
2. **Loans** – Money borrowed by the student and/or parents that must be repaid. Many loans have a low interest rate, and payment often does not begin until seven to ten months after the student leaves college.
3. **Work-Study Jobs** – Students are paid by the hour for work performed on campus through a work-study program.

Institutional Scholarships

Scholarships are merit awards given on the basis of exceptional ability (e.g., academics or athletics). Scholarship money is not given on the basis of financial need. It does not have to be repaid. The best source of scholarship money is the colleges and universities themselves. Colleges seeking to enroll particularly desirable applicants sometimes offer unsolicited "merit scholarships" along with their acceptances as an incentive for a student to attend their institution. Other college-based scholarships must be applied for separately. Students who are planning to apply for scholarship aid should be sure to ask for scholarship and financial aid information along with other application materials.

Outside Scholarships

Every year, thousands of scholarships are awarded to students by private businesses, organizations, and foundations. They range from very small awards (\$500 for one year) to full, four-year scholarships. Large scholarships of this type, however, are extremely difficult to procure. The number of scholarships awarded is typically very small, and the pool of applicants is often national. Also, scholarship money procured from outside sources is often deducted from a college or university's own financial aid awards. Scholarship books and websites are available to help search for outside money (*see the list of recommendations at the end of this section*). Though we certainly encourage students to pursue scholarship money, we caution against spending too much time applying for scholarships that are highly unlikely to be won. Once again, the best source of scholarship aid is the individual college or university that a student wishes to attend.

Aid for International Students

Financial aid for international students is different and more difficult to attain than for US citizens. It is important that our international families understand this process and how it impacts their students. It is also important to understand that most information that will be visible regarding the average cost after aid is NOT applicable to international students. The Counselor will be very clear with international students about researching what can be offered to them versus to U.S. citizens.

Public Universities (State Schools)

Institutional aid for these schools is determined through the FAFSA application. **In order to submit this application, parents and students must have a Social Security number**, and pay taxes in the United States. While state schools may be a less expensive route, their ability to provide funding is limited for non-U.S. citizens. Information can be found at <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility>.

Private Universities

Private universities set their own policies and rely on money that belongs to the university. Each school

has a different set of rules on who is eligible.

Need Blind vs. Need Aware

Many private schools promise to meet the needs of any accepted student, and will. There are two policies that schools use – Need Blind and Need Aware.

Need Blind means that the amount of money a student needs will not be considered as an admissions factor. Very, very few of these schools are Need Blind for international students. Instead, they are **Need Aware**, which means that a qualified student may be turned down because of the amount of money they will need. **Learn more at this site - <https://interstride.com/blog/need-blind-u-s-universities-for-international-students/>.**

Again, it is important to be clear about how much a family can contribute to their child's education ahead of time and, if you are not actively involved in the application process, to communicate this to your student.

Scholarship Companies and Financial Aid Traps

While some financial aid counselors are considered legitimate, charging a fee but laying out clearly what they can and cannot do, scam artists abound. It is important to understand that while these counselors can answer questions about the financial aid process, it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to unlock "secrets" about the process. (See the *Warning Signs* box below for tips on identifying financial aid scams, and see *Financial Aid Help Online*, for websites with free help navigating the financial-aid process).

Warning Signs of Financial Aid Scams

If you're planning to hire professional counseling to help with your financial aid application, here are several red flags:

- A company guarantees to find you a bigger pot of financial aid.
- A company guarantees to find you a scholarship.
- A company charges a fee.**
- You are asked for credit card or bank account information.
- A service promises to turn up scholarships that you can't find elsewhere.
- You are called to receive an award for which you never applied.
- A sponsor does not supply valid contact information on request.
- You're invited to a "free" seminar – and it turns into a high-pressure sales push.

Reduced Tuition Exchange Program

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) offers a reduced tuition program called the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). The program offers exchanges for students on a space-available, or first-come-first-served basis among state universities in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Students participating in WUE pay 150% of in-state tuition at participating universities. To be eligible, an applicant must be a resident of one of the participating states. Some colleges and universities also have additional criteria such as ACT/SAT test scores or high school GPA. Further information may be found online at www.wiche.edu/sep/wue, or by calling WICHE-WUE at (303) 541-0214. The financial aid offices at participating universities can also explain the program and their own WUE offerings.

Arizona State Schools and Residency

To be considered an Arizona resident and qualify for in-state tuition, the parent must have an Arizona residence, and **must pay Arizona state taxes**. Students that have attended Orme for 3 plus years and graduate qualify for a tuition rate of that is the in-state rate plus 50%.

Visiting Colleges

Visiting college campuses is a great additional step in the college selection process. It is not unusual for a college that is “first choice” on paper to be crossed off a list altogether after a visit. Likewise, a previously unknown college suggested by a counselor could become a favorite after a visit.

If you are not able to make college visits, there is a plethora of videos online, and many students get a real feel for a campus through YouTube and social media. Most schools also have virtual tours available.

Ideally, college visits take place when the college is in session. However, we encourage students to take advantage of family trips over vacations and summer break to tour campuses, attend information sessions, and speak with admissions representatives. Call ahead to confirm tour times and make an appointment for an interview if interviews are offered. Then, of course, be on time!

Tips for making the most of a college visit:

Research each school before arriving on campus. Read about it in a college guidebook. Also, visit the college’s website, read through the “undergraduate admissions” information, and take a “virtual tour” if offered.

While on campus, be sure to look at residence halls, classroom facilities, lecture halls, lab facilities, dining halls, athletic and art facilities, and the student union. Keep an eye out for bulletin boards that list activities, and look for a copy of the student newspaper in the admissions waiting area or elsewhere on campus. These are often your best sources for getting a true feeling for the flavor of a college.

Have a snack in the dining hall and “people watch” if you have time. Don’t be afraid to ask a few random students what they like best and least about the college. If you’re visiting when school is not in session, ask your student tour guide these questions. Also, find out what other colleges your tour guide applied to, and ask why he or she chose that college over others.

Try to imagine yourself as a student on each campus you visit. Would you feel comfortable there? Does the campus seem like an exciting place? Could you see yourself spending four years there? Take a camera and snap a few photos of the campus. Write down your impressions immediately after visiting the school. What did you like? What didn’t you like? What would you like to know more about? If you’re visiting more than one campus in a day (don’t try to visit more than two in one day!), don’t wait until after you’ve seen both colleges to record your thoughts. After you have visited a number of schools, details of each will begin to blur. *See also the *College Visit Checklist* in the Appendix.

The Interview

Over the past ten years, many colleges discontinued personal interviews as part of the application process because interviews potentially put some students at a disadvantage if they did not have the resources to travel to college campuses far from home. Recently, though, more and more colleges are offering virtual information sessions, and virtual one-on-one conversations that can also serve the admission committee in their quest to get to know their applicants more fully. If a school offers an interview, it’s highly advised to take advantage of it.

The most important advice for these interviews and conversations – Be yourself! It also helps to be a little early (especially if this is an online interview. You want to be prepared for any Wi-Fi or technical challenges,) be neatly dressed, and be prepared to ask and answer questions.

If a student is engaging in a virtual interview or conversation, it is VERY helpful to an admission professional that they see the student’s face and not the top of the head or a preloaded avatar.

This is the student’s opportunity to become more than a GPA, or a list of activities. It is best approached as a friendly conversation. It is perfectly natural to take a moment to think before

answering a question, and there are no “right” or “wrong” answers – admission professionals simply want to learn more about an applicant as a person. Students should be prepared to answer questions about themselves and to ask thoughtful questions **that are not answered in the college view book or in the college guides!** (For example, avoid general questions about the size of the school or what majors are offered.) Being as knowledgeable as possible about the college before the interview is key. It’s okay to write a few questions down and refer to them during the interview, but be sure to make eye contact as much as possible, and try to relax. If something strikes you as funny, go ahead and laugh. If talking with you is an enjoyable experience for the interviewer, it can only benefit your application. It never hurts to write a follow-up thank you email for their time (it might turn out to be your favorite college choice, and every advantage helps!).

The Orme School’s College Visitation Policy

Seniors are allowed three days of excused absence to visit colleges. Two of those days are allowed only with appropriate college admissions appointments, and a pass must be submitted to and approved by the Director of College Counseling, the Dean of Students, and the Dean of Academics. Permission must be granted by the above parties and any teachers on the relevant day before missing school for college visits. Any college-related absence beyond these days will be unexcused.

Colleges Visiting The Orme School

Over 200 colleges and universities send admissions representatives to meet with students in Arizona. Most of these visits occur in September, October and November when college representatives converge in Phoenix for a series of college fairs, but some visits continue throughout the year. Students are advised of upcoming college representatives on Orme School’s campus, or virtual visit opportunities at morning announcements and via email.

Online and in person college meetings provide students with an opportunity to learn more about a college, to ask questions of an admission representative, to collect literature about the college, and to place their names on the college’s mailing list. College reps who visit with Orme students are usually the admissions counselors who are responsible for Arizona applicants. They are often the first ones to read applications from Orme School students, and they are in a position to act as advocates for a student when his or her file goes before a college admissions committee for a decision. **Seniors, therefore, should be sure to attend the meetings and introduce themselves to the representatives of any colleges to which they may be applying.**

Seniors and Juniors are allowed to miss classes to attend college meetings, with advance permission from the teacher of whose class the student will be missing.

Seniors are also given the opportunity to attend the Phoenix College Fair.

Finalizing the College List

Once colleges have been researched and visited, it’s time to make a final list of colleges to which a student will actually apply. There is no magic number of colleges that we recommend for college lists, but we do advise seniors to be sure that they have made selections that will ensure they have choices when the application process is completed, and colleges have mailed their acceptance letters. Keep in mind that admission decisions are often unpredictable and vary from year to year. With that in mind, we advise students to plan their college choices in three categories:

1. **HIGHLY LIKELY SCHOOLS** – Colleges for which a student is clearly qualified and where there is little doubt of his or her acceptance, as well as the financial ability to attend. One of these schools should be a state college or university in the state in which the student is a resident. (Arizona state colleges or universities **may** fall into this category.)
2. **LIKELY SCHOOLS** – Colleges that a student would like to attend, and to which he or she is a strong candidate and likely to be accepted and may not receive the aid they may need.

3. **REACH SCHOOLS** – Colleges that a student would like to attend but that might have highly competitive admissions processes or admissions criteria that the student may not fully meet.

Athletics and the College Selection Process

Athletics have played a very important part of many students' experience at The Orme School and, naturally, many hope to continue their participation at the college level. For most student-athletes, even accomplished ones, athletics will simply be part of their larger application profile, much like any other significant extra-curricular activity pursued at Orme. Each year, a very few students will be "recruited" by colleges, either by mail, phone, email, or in-person at summer camps. Please be cautious about what coaches say. Remember, they do not make admission decisions; rather, they have varying degrees of influence with the admission office. Unfortunately, we have seen many instances of coaches making "promises" that they could not keep, thus raising unrealistic expectations with students and leading to real disappointments down the road.

College-level athletic programs include a wide variety of competition levels, from intramural teams to club sports and varsity teams at Division I, II, and III ranked colleges and universities. Colleges are members of one or another division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships. (Division III colleges do not offer athletic scholarships.) Those students who wish to play at the most competitive levels – Divisions I & II – must be certified by the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Eligibility Center. (Certification is not necessary for Division III sports.) Juniors are advised of this policy, and will need to download the appropriate forms. To find out what division a college is in, consult a general college guide or the individual college's website, or go to: www.ncaa.org.

A student who thinks that athletics will play a prominent role in his or her college applications should first speak with his or her Orme School coach to determine, initially, whether the coach thinks that the student-athlete will be able to compete at the college level. Students should then write to the coaches at the colleges to which they are considering applying, and include an athletics resumé and any relevant game footage. Students should also supply their Orme School coaches with the names and phone numbers of the appropriate college coaches so that Orme School coaches can make contact directly. Also, when visiting colleges, student-athletes should schedule appointments with coaches. We caution students to beware of athletic recruiting/scholarship services that charge exorbitant fees to "represent" athletes to colleges. In fact, these agencies have virtually no influence in college athletics and admissions decisions.

Visit <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future> for NCAA eligibility information.

The College Application Process

Application Plans

Many colleges and universities offer more than one application plan in order to spread out their applications and "lock in" some of their most desirable applicants early in the year. Early application deadlines are typically in November.

Early Decision

Early Decision plans are binding. Applicants may apply to only one college under this plan, and they are ethically required to attend that college if admitted. Colleges require signatures from parents, students and the College Counselor on a contract stating they will attend the school if admitted.

Some colleges offer two early decision plans – one in November, and a second in late December or early January, which can be used by applicants who are denied early admission at an earlier date at other colleges. In some cases it is acceptable to apply to colleges with "early action" or "rolling admission" plans at the same time as applying for early decision, but if a student is admitted under an "early decision" plan, he or she must withdraw his or her applications to all other schools. Students

should read application forms carefully to determine individual colleges' application policies. (See the *NACAC Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities* in the Appendix for more information.)

A list of the advantages and disadvantages of applying early decision follows this section.

Early Action

Early Action plans are nonbinding. Applicants may often apply to more than one college under this plan, and have until the standard May 1 deadline to commit to attending any college to which they are accepted. Stanford, Yale, and Harvard have further tweaked the Early Action program by forbidding applicants to their institutions from applying Early Action to more than one school at a time with what they refer to as "Restrictive Early Action" (REA). In any case, students should always carefully note the requirements for an individual college's admissions programs. Early Action is advised if the student is ready to make their applications because decisions are released much earlier.

Regular Decision

Students who apply under regular decision plans typically have an application deadline for each college, which varies from January 1 to February 15, with most deadlines in January. Decisions are then mailed in the spring, usually in late March and early April, and students have until May 1 to make a deposit at the college that they will be attending, and to notify other colleges that have offered them acceptances that they will be attending elsewhere.

Rolling Admission

The other application plan used by some colleges and universities is Rolling Admission. At colleges such as ASU, students may apply as early as they wish in their senior year, and the applicant is notified a certain time after the application file is complete (usually four to six weeks after). Decisions are nonbinding – accepted applicants have until May 1 to notify colleges as to whether they will be attending – but it is often to the advantage of a student to file a deposit and secure housing early, even if he or she may choose later to forfeit the deposit and attend a different school. (This is generally the case with large universities where on-campus housing is limited.)

NOTE: We strongly advise that students applying under Regular and Rolling Admissions plans submit their applications as early as possible.

Ideally, students should file their applications in November for the best consideration, and **we ask students to have all of their applications completed by the end of first semester**. Application deadlines are firm, and waiting until the deadline is stressful and tempts fate. While college counselors may give reminders about upcoming application deadlines, **it is the student's responsibility to keep track of his or her own deadlines, and to take the necessary steps to be sure that all parts of the application are filed on time.**

International Students

Applying to US Colleges

There is no limit to the number of colleges to which you may apply. Make sure you request an international application from the colleges/universities that you are considering as most have different or additional requirements for international students. **It is essential that international students research every school in which they plan to apply thoroughly.** The rules, percentages, deadlines etc. may not apply to non-citizens. The needed information is sometimes buried deep in the college website, so being thorough is important.

All colleges request significant financial documentation. These official documents must be **original forms** from your home financial institution. You will need several.

Testing

American colleges and universities may require students to take the SAT. Register for these tests online at collegeboard.org. If your first language is not English, then you may also be asked take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or a DUOLINGO test that you can schedule independently through <https://englishtest.duolingo.com/>. Duolingo also gives you opportunities to practice for free! A student may ask for an English proficiency waiver based on attending school in English. It is up to each school to provide that waiver.

Affording College in the United States

Many American universities offer need or merit based financial aid to international students. Generally, more aid is available from private colleges than state universities. Other forms of financial aid to consider include athletic scholarships, or scholarships based on ethnicity. The F-1 student visa allows a student to work up to 20 hours per week, which might ease the pinch of minor living expenses.

Applying for the Visa

To live in the United States as a student, you will need a non-immigrant visa. To be eligible for the visa, you must provide proof of college/university acceptance as a full-time student. The university will provide students with an I-20 document for this purpose. Additional documents required for the student visa application include:

- ⊗ Birth certificate
- ⊗ Current, valid passport
- ⊗ I-20 form
- ⊗ Evidence of financial support over the duration of stay in America
- ⊗ Two passport-size photographs
- ⊗ Completed non-immigrant visa application

We strongly encourage international students to carefully review the additional requirements and deadlines expected of you by American schools. Planning ahead and organization are particularly important as much of the documentation required to complete your college application must come from your native country.

The fall application crunch can be made easier if you arrive in August with your financial documents ready to go.

International Orme Seniors should also review instructions on last page of this Handbook for additional guidance.

The Pros and Cons of Early Decision

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Applying Early Decision demonstrates your strong and sincere interest in a college.⊗ It is often your “best shot” at a college where one of your parents is an alum, or where you are being recruited for athletics.⊗ It eliminates the expense of sending application fees to a number of schools.⊗ If you are turned down early your application may still be deferred to the regular pool.⊗ You get teacher recommendations and school papers taken care of before the mid-winter crunch.⊗ An early acceptance can enable you to relax and enjoy your senior year more.⊗ Friends and family can shop for your holiday gifts at the college store website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Because of the short amount of time between Early Decision notification and Regular Decision deadlines, you will have to fill out most other applications anyway just in case you are not accepted early.⊗ An Early Decision acceptance takes away further choices – your ideas about what you want in a college may change during your senior year.⊗ Many colleges are swamped with strong Early Decision candidates. Your record might stand out more when competing with the broader Regular Decision pool.⊗ If your grades are on the upswing, you’d do better applying when your fall term, senior year grades are on your transcript.⊗ The college knows you are coming and may be less generous with financial aid.⊗ You can’t compare and negotiate financial aid offers unless you receive them from several colleges.

Wait Lists

Occasionally, colleges place qualified candidates for whom they cannot offer admission onto Wait Lists. The chances of being selected from a Wait List and offered admission varies widely depending on the size of a given college’s list and how many admitted students choose to enroll in a given year. Some colleges refuse to divulge the size of their Wait Lists, while others will only tell if asked.

A student who is Wait Listed at College A and has been admitted to College B (that he or she would like to attend), should request that his or her name be removed from College A’s Wait List. A student who wishes to remain on the Wait List is advised to send a deposit to a college where he or she has gained admission. If the student is subsequently taken off the Wait List and offered admission, he or she will forfeit the deposit at the other college. (Colleges are expected to notify applicants of the resolution of their Wait List status no later than August 1.)

Making a deposit at more than one college for any other reason is considered unethical, and is considered a no-no in college admissions. The Orme School will send a student’s final transcript to only one college unless the student has been placed on a Wait List. (See the *NACAC Statement of Students’ Rights and Responsibilities* in the Appendix for further information.)

Tips for the Wait Listed

SAY IT LOUD. Let the admissions office know you’re still keen to attend and why it’s your first choice. A written email to your admissions representative (or anyone they may have indicated in your Wait List offer letter) is best practice.

MORE INFO. If you've accomplished anything note-worthy since you initially applied, send information. Newspaper clippings from sports or arts accomplishments, for example, could help. The University of Virginia once admitted a Wait-Listed student after she sent images of her horseback gymnastics performance.

NO PARENTS. Do not have/let your parents call the admissions office. **The college wants to see you advocating for yourself.**

Filling Out Applications

Once students have submitted some applications via Common App or through a specific college's website, extra attention must be paid to the email account the student listed. College admission offices are mainly relying on email to communicate with applicants, although more are sending texts if the student gives permission in the application. ***Note:** You will need an email address that is "generic." `gamerbro@schoolstinks.net` won't necessarily help you in admissions!

All applications must be approved by the College Counselor before they are sent. This applies to students who might be using an independent counselor. The Orme School College Counselor knows you, the correct names of what you've participated in, and their name is on the application. Your application not only represents you, but the entire school and it's important that it be top-notch.

Scoir

The Orme School uses Scoir as their College Counseling platform. Students, counselors, teachers and parents can use Scoir as a way to keep track of everything during the application process. A parent can request access to their child's Scoir account to keep tabs of where they are in the process. It's important for each student to maintain and update their Scoir account, as it serves as the major communication and information hub for the Counselor. To learn more about Scoir go to their website: <https://www.scoir.com>.

The Common Application vs. Institutional Applications

The *Common Application* enables students to fill out one application for several colleges, often saving a great deal of time and avoiding the inevitable redundancy inherent in filling out applications for individual schools. Over 900 colleges and universities accept the *Common Application*, and some now use it exclusively. To find out which colleges accept the *Common Application* and to download the forms and apply electronically, go to: www.commonapp.org. The Common Application can be used in conjunction with Scoir.

Many colleges also require a supplement to the *Common Application*, asking applicants to respond in short essay form to many different kinds of prompts. Some may ask, "Why (college name)." Colleges and universities that accept the *Common Application* pledge to give it the same consideration as their institutional applications and, in many cases, this application method makes sense for our students. We advise, though, that students using the *Common Application* take care to use it judiciously. They should be thorough and thoughtful with supplements, and they should be on the alert for questions that might apply differently to different colleges. (For example, the question, "What activities do you plan to pursue in college?" might be answered differently if the application is going to a college that has a specialized program that other colleges do not offer.) We recommend that students use individual institutional applications when applying under an Early Decision plan and, regardless of the type of application used, students must take care to follow directions.

CEEB CODE

An applicant's high school CEEB code is requested on most application materials.
The Orme School code is: **030-210**

Demonstrated Interest

When trying to discriminate among similar applicants, colleges often consult a student's "demonstrated interest" with that institution. Applicants who apply using the Common Application, have never made a campus visit, and have not spoken with an admissions representative who visited their high school are more likely to be rejected than a similarly qualified applicant who has demonstrated a high level of interest in a particular college.

Some colleges can reject or Wait List applicants who are very well qualified but who have, based on their "contact history," made it apparent that that college is merely a "back up" choice and not one they truly wish to attend. It is most definitely to an applicant's advantage to have demonstrated genuine interest by visiting campus, having an interview (if available), making contact with an admissions representative on a high school visit, and making all inquiries personally (not relying on Mom or Dad to make arrangements or gather information).

When using the Common Application, take extra care with supplemental essay questions that ask you to indicate why you are attracted to a particular college. Avoid generic responses that could apply to a hundred other schools. Demonstrate that you've done your research by emphasizing the distinctive qualities of a given college that make it a good match for you.

John Anderson, the Director of College Counseling at Philips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, advises: *"Give as much attention as possible to every college on your list. Over the course of your college search, your interest in any one of your colleges may shift upward or downward. Do not damage your chances with a college that might have started lower on your list by ignoring it early in the process. But remember too that your list should include only colleges that are a good fit for you and that you think you would really want to attend. For each of these colleges, find the features that are attractive to you. Then, to convince a school that you're really interested, you'll need to show how the features the school offers match your own needs."*

The Activities List

Involvement in non-academic activities can be helpful when applying to college. Indeed, colleges look for applicants who are not only good students, but also well-rounded individuals who pursue their interests and passions. Leadership, also, is a highly desired trait and is often evident in a student's extra-curricular activities. Colleges look for genuine interest and commitment in the activities a student has pursued during high school. For example, a student who has taken drama classes and has been involved in several plays can demonstrate his or her high level of commitment to acting on the "Activities List" of the application. Also, a student who has pursued one meaningful community service activity will demonstrate a more genuine commitment than a student who has fulfilled our community service requirement by picking up hours randomly.

Many applications (including the Common Application) ask students to indicate which extra-curricular activity has been the most meaningful to her or him, and why. The "Activities" section of the application also typically asks a student to indicate how many hours per week and weeks per year she or he devotes to each extra-curricular activity. This information helps colleges put academic achievements into perspective.

There is an area in Scoir in which students can build their activities list, and maintain it through the year. By entering it in Scoir, the College Counselor is able to help each student create a meaningful and honest activity list.

Writing the Essay

The college application essay is the student's best opportunity to distinguish him or herself from other applicants. It can be a deciding factor in the admissions process, as it presents the applicant as a person rather than a set of statistics. A good essay animates a candidate, reveals the way he or she thinks, and conveys passion, curiosity, and sense of humor, providing an insight into what is special and unique about that individual. Whatever the topic, the essay should be, first and foremost, personal. It should convey something about the applicant that does not come across elsewhere in the application. One mistake students make is trying to anticipate what topic would most impress a college. Admissions officers read hundreds, sometimes thousands of essays every year. They appreciate a fresh, honest voice that conveys a true sense of self.

The essay is also a sample of an applicant's writing skill and should be his or her best possible effort. At The Orme School, counselors and teachers are ready, willing, and able to help seniors with their essays at any time during the fall. Guidance (and proofreading!) can be very helpful; though **it is essential the essay is the student's work**, reflecting their own interests, skills, and personality. **Teachers and parents must resist the temptation to rewrite a student's essay.** Jay Mathews, a *Washington Post* staff writer and author of the alternative college guide, *Harvard Schmarvard*, suggests this guideline: that parents critique student essays and offer proofreading advice verbally, without touching the essay.

Students should never send an essay or essays without having them read by the College Counselor.

The Common Application Essay Prompts: (650 words maximum)

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Recommended reading on the college essay:

- ⊗ <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>
- ⊗ Curry and Kasbar, *Essays That Worked*
- ⊗ McGinty, *The College Application Essay*

Recommended reading on the application process in general:

- ⊗ Mitchell, *Winning the Heart of the College Admissions Dean*
- ⊗ Tough, *The Years That Matter Most*
- ⊗ Robinson and Katzman, *College Admissions: Cracking the System*
- ⊗ Moll, *Playing the Private College Admissions Game*
- ⊗ Oliveira, et al., *Getting In*
- ⊗ Mayher, *The College Admissions Mystique*
- ⊗ Hernandez, *A is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other*

Top Colleges

- ⊗ Gelbrand et al, *Your College Application*
- ⊗ Ordovensky and Thornton, *Opening College Doors*
- ⊗ Students Helping Students, *Choose the Right College and Get Accepted*

Secondary School Reports and Transcript Requests

College applications include the student portion and also parts that are to be completed by the College Counselor and classroom teachers. One of the challenges of the application process is making sure these additional forms get into the right hands well before the application deadlines. The College Counselor helps their students with this task, and many meetings in the fall are devoted to guiding students through the process. **Students are also responsible for sending required standardized test scores to colleges.** Organization is key – an Application Checklist is provided in the Appendix.

College applications (including the Common Application) typically include separate forms that require the school to provide basic information about the applicant's academic history, (such as GPA), and ask for an evaluation from the College Counselor. Typically these forms are entitled, "**Secondary School Report,**" "**High School Report,**" or simply, "**School Report.**" Also be sure and locate the "**Mid-Year Report,**" which reports first semester grades. The College Counselor then assembles The Orme School's portion of the application package, which includes: an official school transcript, the Secondary School Report, the College Counselor's recommendation letter, and the **School Profile** (which provides information about our course offerings and our grading system).

Many schools work in conjunction with Scoir, and all of these documents are stored and sent to colleges through that platform. Again, this enables the College Counselor to know what has been done, and be aware of any missing documentation.

Please be mindful that in order to ensure that deadlines are met, seniors must read all emails carefully and complete assignments for College Counseling as assigned.

Ranking

The Secondary School Report form typically requests that the school report an applicant's rank in his or her class. This figure is intended to help colleges evaluate an applicant's academic performance in the context of his or her classmates. Because The Orme School is a small, college preparatory school, we find that ranking is not appropriate for our students, as our selective admissions process results in a student body that is closely grouped in ability and achievement. The student whose official rank might be toward the bottom of the class could be an excellent candidate for many selective colleges. **Therefore, The Orme School, like many similar small college preparatory schools, does not rank.**

Teacher Recommendations

Most colleges and universities require recommendations from two of the applicant's teachers. We advise students to request recommendations from two junior year teachers before the end of their junior school year. The best teacher recommendation comes from a teacher who knows a student well and has seen a student grow intellectually, regardless of the grade the student received in his or her course. The College Counselor is happy to help students decide which teachers to ask. It is also very helpful to those writing letters of recommendation to have a resumé of the student's activities, awards and accomplishments while in high school.

Students sometimes wish to send additional recommendation letters, either from an additional Orme School teacher, from a coach, or from someone outside of school. For the most part, college admission officers do not have the time to read through extra application materials. We advise that students only send additional letters if the person who is writing the recommendation knows the student very well, and his or her letter will include information and observations about the student that would not be revealed in the teacher or Counselor recommendations.

Sometimes an employer, for instance, or the sponsor of a community service project can provide a unique insight into an applicant. A family friend, however, who has “connections” with a college but has had only casual contact with an applicant, cannot write an effective recommendation.

The easy Letter of Recommendation procedure:

Step One: A quick conversation with a teacher to start, is best. If they agree to write a letter, follow up immediately with an email confirmation with your earliest deadline.

Step Two: In the student’s Scoir Account, visit the My Colleges page. Click on the “Application Documents” button and select your teacher from the pull-down menu. Write a quick note when prompted, and submit. The teachers you indicated will then be notified and will upload your letters electronically.

That’s it! College Counseling does the rest.

FERPA Waiver

Some college applications request students indicate whether or not they are willing to waive their legal right to have access to their teacher or counselor recommendations. We strongly recommend that students sign this waiver as it gives recommendations much more credibility. Colleges assume that those providing the recommendations will be more candid in their evaluations if they know that the applicants will not be reading their recommendations at a later date. The College Counselor and teachers have wonderful things to say about Orme School students, and we want our input to be given the greatest consideration possible.

If an Orme School student faces disciplinary action for any activity that poses a significant risk to the safety or well-being of themselves, other students, or members of the school community, or for conduct in violation of The Orme School Honor Code, the school may disclose information about that disciplinary action to officials of other schools who have a legitimate educational interest in the student’s behavior.

Sending Scores

It is **NOT** The Orme School’s policy to place standardized test scores reported to the school on students’ transcripts. Scores must be sent directly from the testing organizations, such as College Board, or ACT. Students who indicate in the test registration process which schools should receive their scores do not need to take further action, but most students need to contact the College Board (SAT) or American College Testing Program (ACT) or ETS (for the TOEFL) to have their scores sent. This can easily be accomplished at the test companies’ websites – www.collegeboard.com, www.act.org and www.ets.org/toefl. There is a fee for this service. Once a student has enrolled at a college or university, he or she is responsible for sending official Advance Placement scores to receive college credit. (*Instructions are in the “Student Pack” booklet given to students during AP testing.*)

I’m In! Now What?

Students who apply under binding Early Decision programs are typically notified of their application decisions in mid-December (for November applicants) or mid-February (for January applicants). Those who are accepted under Early Decision are required to send a deposit to the college and notify the College Counselor to send final transcripts to the college. Mid-year and final transcripts are automatically sent to colleges that have accepted students’ Early Decision. Mid-year transcripts are also sent to all colleges to which students have applied under Regular or Rolling Admission programs, and final transcripts are sent to the single college that each student has chosen to attend.

A student who is accepted under Early Decision, Regular Decision, or Rolling Decision programs has until May 1 to send in a deposit to the college that she or he has chosen to attend, and to notify other colleges of her or his final decision. We advise students to notify

colleges they will not be attending in writing, including a polite thank you note. Not only is such communication important in maintaining positive relationships between The Orme School and colleges, but it is also in the best interest of students who may, in the unforeseen future, wish to reopen communications with a college that was not initially a first choice. That polite note sent in April will help smooth the way!

Finally, **all seniors need to be aware that no college acceptance is final until the FINAL high school transcript has been received and processed in June.** It is an all too common misconception amongst seniors that once a college acceptance has been received, it is no longer necessary to work hard in classes. "Senioritis" often hits students in the spring, and the temptation to relax and enjoy the last months of school free from the encumbrance of studying is powerful, indeed. While we certainly want our seniors to savor those last months, we strongly caution them to be aware that colleges expect that their final high school transcripts will reflect the same level of scholarship in the second semester of senior year as that of the first semester. Slight decreases in grades may be overlooked, but "A" students who receive "Cs" in their second semester may be jeopardizing their college acceptances. It is not unheard of for a college to place a student on academic probation for his or her first semester in college as a result of second semester high school grades, and it is possible for a college to withdraw an acceptance based on poor performance.

Most college acceptance letters include a cautionary statement on this subject. The Stanford University 2005 application states: *If you are offered admission, Stanford reserves the right to withdraw that offer of admission if: 1) you show a significant drop in academic performance or fail to graduate; 2) you have misrepresented yourself in the application process; 3) we learn that you have engaged in behavior prior to matriculation that indicates a serious lack of judgment or integrity; or 4) you are holding, beyond May 1, 2005, a place in the freshman class of a college other than Stanford.* The choice of which college to attend is one of the first adult decisions that our students make. The choice of how they will finish their senior year is another. Enough said!

For Parents

The College Counselor is charged with guiding a senior through the mechanics of the college application process. Counselors and parents offer advice and support, but please remember that **the student must ultimately be responsible for the process and the decisions.** The College Counselor is happy to counsel parents through the process as well, and we recommend the following books especially for parents:

Tough, Paul, *The Years That Matter Most*

Woodacre & Bane, *Doors Open From Both Sides*

Pasick, *Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College*

Coburn & Treeger, *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years*

Barkin, *When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parent's Survival Guide*

Borden, Burlinson & Kerns, *In Addition to Tuition: The Parents' Survival Guide to the Freshman Year of College*

MacGowan & McGinty, *50 College Admission Directors Speak to Parents*

The Transition to College

Once the college admissions process is over, it's time to start thinking about making the transition to college. While the anticipation of increased freedom is exciting, there are myriad challenges lying ahead, from figuring out how to strike a balance between academics and recreation, to dealing with a roommate or handling social pressures. We recommend the following books, written by college students for college freshmen, which offer helpful and practical advice to help ease the transition (great graduation gift idea!):

Students-Helping-Students, *Navigating Your Freshman Year*

Kaufmann & Bernstein, *How to Survive Your Freshman Year*

Terms and Other Useful “Stuff”

fafsa.ed.gov is the federal government's website for information about the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). Students who apply online will get their application results 7 to 14 days faster than if they mail a paper FAFSA. Students can print a paper copy of the FAFSA to use as a worksheet. The FAFSA site has a link to the PIN site listed below – an important first step!

edonline.com/cq/hbcu/ includes scholarship information and financial aid advice from the organization of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Do I really need to read my College Counseling Handbook?

Yes. Absolutely. Though you've probably received more than your share of handouts lately, this is one to keep. Much of the nuts and bolts information you'll need is in here.

In discussions about college, certain names of schools keep popping up. If I don't go to one of these schools with a magical name, will I be doomed to failure?

Definitely not. Here are a few thoughts to ponder: The “Ivy League” is simply a reference to a sports conference.

Ronald Reagan attended Eureka College. (Where? My point exactly. Whether you liked the Ol' Gipper or not, you probably assumed his alma mater had a little more of a familiar ring to it.)

St. John's College—NOT a name typically on many high school students' lips—sends over 80% of its graduates on to graduate school, or to study medicine or law. (Pope, 265) There are many such excellent schools out there but, because of small or nonexistent graduate programs and small or nonexistent sports teams, they don't end up with the name recognition so crucial to “selectivity.” But what about all this talk of “selectivity?” Isn't that the most important thing?

What do the acceptance percentages really mean?

In the 2024 admissions cycle at Emory University, which has an acceptance rate of 11%, had 30,336 applicants, and accepted 2,395 applicants with a target enrollment of 1435 freshmen.

Schools with admission percentages of 50% or less are **selective**. Don't fool yourself into thinking that's an easy in. When you get to 15% it's like buying a lottery ticket in some ways. Students with 4.5 averages, over 1500 SAT scores and 5's on all their AP courses still get denied. Give it a shot, but with a strong dose of reality.

Ever since I started talking about college, it seems like everyone has an opinion about which college is “best” for me.

Listen as you see fit, but have a grain of salt (or two) on hand. Create and respect your own boundaries. You are the one that has to go.

How do I even begin thinking about where to look, then?

Collect as much information as you can. Read. Network. Ask questions. Google, Google, Google! And then think about what sorts of questions matter most to you. Do you want to be at a large school where you don't have to be noticed? Do you like the thought of having dinner at a professor's house? Do you want a strong Greek system? Do you need plenty of running trails? Think about the characteristics—big and small—that could make or break a decision for you.

What can I expect from my parents this year?

Mostly support, but keep in mind that this can be a time of high emotional intensity for all involved, so just be aware and be ready to take an occasional “time out” if needed.

What about the essay? I've heard horror stories.

Basically, be original, be humble, and be yourself. Try to avoid such overused topics, and think about

how the college admissions readers can get to know the real you in your essay. Since the onset of “test optional,” the essay is your chance to show them who you are. And an original, interesting one could make a reader stop and reconsider.

What’s the real role of the College Counselor?

He or she is a guide and mentor, but no magician, so keep in mind that no College Counselor can “get” a student into college. You can help your Counselor by allowing him or her to get to know you better, but the job of college entrance is pretty much up to you (unless, of course, someone in your family happens to have donated a building, or you starred in a recent Hollywood blockbuster...).

How much credence should I put on *The U.S. News and World Report* college rankings?

The rankings have to do with things like endowment, alumni giving, and students accepted, but little to do with what actually goes on in the classroom. You might spend that time exploring the course catalog of a school, or finding out what current students are saying.

What if I’m rejected from a college?

If you have done your best on your application and put your best foot forward, you are not being “rejected,” **you** are just not the best fit for whatever the school is looking for this year. Try not to take it personally and remember that a college is juggling many requirements as it puts a freshman class together. Even if your scores and GPA are right where they should be, the college is trying to look at a bigger picture than just the one student.

How important is community service?

Know that it is important, but also realize that almost every high school student is doing some sort of service work these days. As with your academics, try to find something MEANINGFUL TO YOU and stick with it.

Commitment says more than you know. Find an opportunity that really could end up being important to you, and not just act as a transcript-filler. SINCERITY COUNTS!

Should I apply to schools even if I don’t really want to go there, but think I might need a “safety net”?

Only apply to a school if you could be happy going there. Otherwise, the application process is not much more than an exercise in futility.

What about Early Decision and Early Action?

Early Decision is binding and should NOT be broken. Early Action is not binding.

In closing, remember many students get into their dream schools, only to transfer out after a year or two. Others go to their last choice and have the best four years of their lives. **You don’t know what you don’t know.** You can’t. You can only do your best to make a decision based on what you would like out of your post high school years. They are meaningful and fleeting, but most importantly, they are yours alone.

APPENDIX

Checklist for Steps in the College Application Process

- _____ Read this handbook from front to back!

- _____ Login to the Scoir account, and keep the My Colleges list up to date.

- _____ Create a free Common App account at commonapp.org and start filling out the profile, adding colleges, and completing the different sections. When ready to submit, it is useful to have a credit card students can use to pay for testing and application expenses.

- _____ Ask teachers to write Teacher Recommendations. Give teachers at least ONE MONTH'S advance notice.

- _____ Note due dates for applications: Regular Decision, Early Action and Early Decision using Common App and Scoir.

- _____ Write essay(s) and share with teachers and the College Counselor for feedback.

- _____ Send SAT scores to colleges online via www.collegeboard.com. To send ACT scores, use www.actstudent.org.

- _____ Double check to make sure all parts of the applications are complete for each college.

- _____ Celebrate, cross your fingers and toes, and keep working hard!

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RIGHTS!

Before You Apply

You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early admission plan, you have the right to complete information from the college about its process and policies. You have the right to be free from high pressure sales tactics.

When You Are Offered Admission

You have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid. Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid. Candidates admitted under early decision programs are a recognized exception to the May 1 deadline.

If You Are Placed On A Wait/Alternate List

The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the Wait List, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing. Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a Wait List. Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your Wait List status by August 1 at the latest.

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

Before You Apply

You have a responsibility to research, and to understand and comply with the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply

You must complete all material required for application, and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications. You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications. It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admission Decisions

You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.

You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a Wait List by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.

If you are accepted under an Early Decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities, and make no additional applications. If you are an Early Decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

If you think your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your College Counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in your area. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to:

National Association for College Admission Counseling
1631 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2818

www.nacacnet.org

Phone: 703-836-2222

800-822-6285

Fax: 703-836-8015

Taking a Gap Year – Alternatives to College

College is not the only option for everyone after graduation. In the past, a few Orme School graduates have chosen to postpone college entrance for a semester or a year in order to pursue other interests and experiences. Many colleges have a deferral policy allowing accepted applicants to put off enrollment for a year or a January/February entrance option. Washington University in St. Louis and Middlebury College, for example, admit a group of students who enter together mid-year, and Colby College runs semester abroad programs for students interested in foreign language immersion. These students begin their Colby studies on campus in January.

Following are examples of some of the alternatives students have pursued:

- ⊗ Working in a restaurant for a year before enrolling in culinary school.
- ⊗ Taking a postgraduate year at an Eastern prep school.
- ⊗ Deferring enrollment at a college and traveling around Europe for a year.
- ⊗ Working for a year to earn money for college.
- ⊗ Working as an Outward Bound instructor before entering college under a January plan.
- ⊗ Attending the Air Force Academy preparatory school for a year before applying to college.

Students who are interested in exploring options other than immediate entrance into college after high school graduation are encouraged to begin researching possibilities. We advise all students, though, to apply to college in any case. Because plans can change during senior year, it is wise to maintain the option of going directly to college. Also, applying to at least one college enables the student to build an application file – complete with teacher and counselor recommendations – that can be kept here at The Orme School for future use. The College Counselor remains available to help graduates through the college application process, but compiling the necessary documentation is most effectively accomplished during senior year.

Study Abroad & “Year Off” Resources

For those anxious to make the most of a summer, semester, or year in overseas study, a number of websites offer useful information. We also recommend a guidebook from Princeton Review.

- ⊗ At www.studyabroad.com, users can locate schools that offer international study programs by searching by school, subject, country, summer programs, year/semester, and language. Each search result features descriptions of programs, contact information, and links to helpful websites. This site even has a section for students interested in studying abroad during high school.
- ⊗ WWOOF (www.woof.net) Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms is a worldwide movement

to link students (WWOOFers) with organic farmers, promote a cultural and educational exchange, and build a global community conscious of ecological farming and sustainability practices.

- ⊗ IIE Passport (www.iiepassport.org) lists 5,000 study options.
- ⊗ AFS Intercultural Programs (www.afs.org) cites a number of programs including school year exchange programs.
- ⊗ Languages Abroad (www.languagesabroad.com) is particularly strong in the area of undergraduate study opportunities.
- ⊗ Princeton Review's *Taking Time Off* includes details on how students can make the most of a "year off" through work, travel, volunteering, or study abroad.

TRANSFERRING YOUR I-20 TO A COLLEGE

Important Instructions for International Seniors

PLEASE BE SURE TO READ THIS! There are a few very important things you need to be aware of regarding your I-20 Form once you graduate from The Orme School in order to meet regulations and policies set by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and DHS (Department of Homeland Security).

Once you have definitely decided which college you will attend next fall, you will need to provide me with a copy of your college Acceptance Letter and International Student I-20 Transfer Form from that college. I will then Transfer your I-20 to the college in SEVIS.

You should look closely at the PROGRAM END DATE on your I-20 Form.

- J **You have up to 60 days from that Program End Date to either Transfer your I-20 to a college or university, or to depart the United States.** You need to be accepted for admission to the college or university you plan to attend before your I-20 can be transferred to that college/university.
- J If you change your mind about which college/university you wish to attend after Orme has Transferred your I-20, we cannot change that I-20 Transfer to another school for you.
- J **On Day 61 after your Program End Date**, if you have not had Orme Transfer your I-20 to a college/university, you will need to get a new I-20 issued to you by the college you have been accepted to and plan to attend. That will then require you to leave the United States and re-enter the country with your new I-20 issued by that college/university.
- J **Also on Day 61**, if you are still in the United States and your I-20 has not been Transferred, you will start accruing "Unlawful Presence" days in the United States. Accumulating Unlawful Presence days can end up affecting your ability to return to the U.S. in the future.
- J If The Orme School becomes aware that an F1 student is still in the United States beyond 60 Days after their Program End Date without having Transferred their I-20, Orme is required to report that to ICE.

If you have any questions, please let me know. The above information is not meant to worry or scare you, but simply to give you a clear and helpful roadmap as you prepare to graduate from The Orme School. We want to make the transition from Orme to college a smooth and enjoyable one for you!

Sincerely,

Paula J. Morris
Executive Assistant & PDSO