

# *The College Application Process*

## **Application Strategies**

Students generally apply to six or eight colleges or universities. This number varies from person to person. What is critical in developing a college list is that the final list should include schools that the student would be happy attending. Students often choose colleges from the following three categories:

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|------------------|---|
| <b>Reach</b>     | A student's top choice college. A <i>reach</i> refers to colleges that generally accept students with GPA's and standardized test scores higher than those of the applicant. Students are encouraged to apply for one or two "long shots".            |
| <b>Realistic</b> | This category refers to colleges that generally accept half or more of the students with GPA's and standardized test scores similar to those of the applicant. Realistic colleges are those at which the probability of admission is 50:50 or better. |
| <b>Safe</b>      | This category refers to colleges that almost always accept students with GPA's and standardized test scores below those of the candidate. Safe colleges are those in which the student is highly likely to be admitted.                               |

Most students consider applying to 2 colleges that are a "reach", 2 that are "realistic" and 2 that are "safe". When students are choosing, they should make sure that they would be happy attending those colleges. Students should give the decision process careful consideration before deciding on a college path.

## **Application Procedures**

- 1.) Obtain information about schools you are interested in. The CHS School Counseling Department has applications and information on many of the Iowa Colleges and Universities. For all other schools, students can write to the individual schools, call for their applications or request them via the internet.
- 2.) It is extremely important that students read and follow the directions contained in the information received from schools. Students will receive instructions on how to complete application forms and will be told exactly what additional materials will be needed to support the application.
- 3.) Students have the responsibility for knowing specific details applicable to each school to which they are applying. Make sure you check deadlines, admission requirements, tests to be taken, etc.
- 4.) Fill out applications as legibly as possible. When possible use a computer, or complete the applications on-line (some colleges even offer fee waivers if the application is completed and submitted on-line).

## **The Application Package: Putting It All Together**

There are two parts of an application package: the student portion and the high school portion.

**Student Portion:** The student should begin by completing his or her portion of the application and then mailing it (or submitting it electronically) to the college.

**School Portion:** The school portion of the application must be completed by the School Counseling Office. Students who require a copy of their high school transcripts must complete a "Transcript Request" form. The "Transcript Request" must have a parent signature for students under the age of 18. Once signed and completed, provide it to the CHS Registrar (Mrs. Mann) and she will mail an official copy of your transcripts to the schools of your choice. The first 2 copies of transcripts are free. Additional copies are available for \$1.00 per copy.

**Additional materials:** Students are often required to include letters of recommendation with their college applications. Students can obtain letters of recommendation from their teachers or counselors. It is recommended that requests for letters of recommendation be accompanied by an official "Requesting a Letter of Recommendation" form. This form helps teachers know exactly who they are writing the letter to, what information should be included, and when the letter is due. The "Requesting a Letter of Recommendation" form is also available in the School Counseling Office.

When requesting a letter of recommendation, the students should:

- Provide the teacher with a timely request. Teachers prefer that students allow at least 2 weeks for the completion of a recommendation letter;
- Provide the teacher with a copy of the "Requesting a Letter of Recommendation" form and a copy of the students "Senior Synopsis".
- For each college letter, provide the letter writer with an addressed envelope with correct postage.
- Write a thank you note to each teacher for taking the time to write your recommendation.

## *When Applying for Admission to College...*

1. Assure that your Senior Synopsis form is completed and on file in the School Counseling Office. Teachers and Counselors use this form to complete their letters of recommendation.
2. Send your college admissions test scores (ACT, SAT, ect.) to the colleges that you are applying to (this can be done when registering for the exam).
3. Be sure that you apply to at least one or two colleges that you feel confident in your admission to.
4. Arrange for a tour and interviews of college's of interest. Be sure to dress appropriately and bring an official copy of your transcripts with you.
5. See your School Counselor you have questions, concerns, and/or need any assistance, please make an appointment to see your counselor. **We are always here to help!**