



**NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL**  
Celebrating 75 Years of Educating Minds and Hearts

**Notre Dame High School**

***CHOOSING A  
COLLEGE***

***CLASS OF 2022***

**Department of  
School and College Counseling**

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**NAVIANCE WEBSITE**  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Self-Awareness.....	4
General College Information.....	6
Undergraduate Degrees.....	6
College Calendar System.....	7
Types of Programs within Colleges and Universities.....	7
Types of Admissions Decisions.....	9
Athletics and Admissions.....	10
How to Choose a College.....	10
Testing For College.....	14
Registration Procedure and Reporting Scores.....	15
High School Code.....	16
Preparing For the SAT and the ACTs.....	16
What about Coaches Courses?.....	16
The College Application Process.....	18
Steps for Applying For College.....	18
The College Visit and Interview.....	22
Timetable for College Visits.....	22
The Interview Process.....	22
Some Questions to Ask at the College Visit.....	23
Questions That Students Often Are Asked at a College Interview.....	24
Interview Follow-Up.....	24
Financial Aid.....	25
Definition of Need.....	25
Sources and Purpose of Student Financial Aid.....	25

## Choosing a College

### Introduction

Making the right choice for your future is extremely difficult. You must examine your values, interests, goals, preferences, and personal circumstances. This booklet is to help you along in the process of making the right choice of school that best fits your needs. There is not one perfect college for anyone. Each school has its strengths and weaknesses. Your task is to find the school that meets the criterion you have set and that can best help you accomplish the goals you have set for yourself.

### Simple Overview of the College Process

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Step 1 | Self-awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are your values?</li><li>• What are your future goals?</li><li>• What do you want from your education?</li><li>• Review of your high school career</li></ul> |
| Step 2 | Developing a list of schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Characteristics of the different colleges</li><li>• What are colleges looking for in me?</li></ul>  |
| Step 3 | College Admissions Testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SAT's</li><li>• ACT's</li></ul>   |
| Step 4 | Visiting Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Campus Tours</li><li>• Interviews</li></ul>   |
| Step 5 | The College Application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where do you get an application?</li><li>• Common Application</li></ul>  |
| Step 6 | Financial Aid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FAFSA</li><li>• CSS Profile</li></ul>  |

### How to Select a College

First, there is no magic choice. There are likely to be many institutions where you would be happy. The only poor college choices are uninformed choices, those made without enough information. An excellent source of information is your high school guidance office. Your counselor will have available a variety of handbooks and software with descriptions of colleges.

Both your parents and you bring a different perspective to choosing a college. You need to consult with your parents so you are all comfortable with the colleges you are selecting. This decision affects both you and your parents.

The following information should be used as a guide through this process. Good Luck!!!

### **Self-Awareness**

The questions which follow can help you focus on future choices and on you as an individual.

You may feel embarrassed or self-conscious when you first consider these questions. Nevertheless, an honest and thoughtful self-evaluation can reveal what you should look for in a college or a job and prepare you for statements you may be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply. A serious look at yourself will help you find the options that are right for you and will help you present yourself effectively to them. If you wish to discuss your answers with someone, consult your parents or your school counselor.

#### **Your Goals and Values:**

1. What aspects of your high school years have been most meaningful to you? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently? If so, what?
2. What values are most important to you? What do you care most about? What occupies most of your energy, effort, and/or thoughts?
3. How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
4. What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
5. Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be? If you had a year to go anywhere you wanted, how would you spend it?
6. What experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

#### **Your Education:**

7. What are your academic interests? What courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been most difficult for you? Why?
8. What do you choose to learn when you learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers; lab reports; independent projects; independent reading; school activities; job or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
9. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teacher engage your interest the most?
10. How would you describe your school? Are learning and academic success respected? Has the school's environment encouraged you to develop your interests, talents, and abilities? Have you felt limited in any way? What would you preserve or change about the school if you were able to do so?
11. Have you worked up to your potential? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your ACT/PSAT/SAT scores? What do you consider the best measures of your potential for college work?
12. Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) that have interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as: after school jobs,

home responsibilities, or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental influences, English not spoken at home, or other factors which are unique to your background.

**Your Activities and Interests:**

13. What activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of classes and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
14. Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution to other individuals, your family and/or school?
15. How would others describe your role in school or your home community? What do you consider your most significant contribution?
16. After a long, hard day what do you most enjoy doing? What is fun or relaxing?

**The World around You:**

17. How would you describe your family? How have they influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by them?
18. What do your parents and friends expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? To what pressures have you felt it necessary to conform?
19. What is the most controversial issue you have encountered in recent years? Why does the issue concern you? What is your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?
20. Have you ever encountered people who think and act differently from you? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
21. What concerns you most about the world around you? Assuming obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start?
22. Do you have any current or historical heroes or heroines? Who are they /why?
23. What books have you read which have changed your way of thinking? Who are some of your favorite writers? Why? Who are some of your favorite characters? Why?

**Your Personality and Relationships with Others:**

24. How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your best qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with their assessment?
25. How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
26. Which relationships are most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider your best friends; your best critics; your best advocates. In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
27. Describe the students at your school. Which ones do you feel you are close to? Do you feel alienated from any? What kind of people do you admire most? Generally, how do you respond to people who think and act differently from what you expect? How do you feel about your teachers?
28. How do others who are important to you influence you? How important is approval, rewards, and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition, or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment, or criticism?
29. How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice, or

guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting?  
How important are fads and fashions?

### **Your College Preferences:**

30. What satisfaction and frustration do you expect to encounter in college? What are you looking forward to? What worries you most? What do you hope to gain from college? What is the overriding consideration in your choice of college?
31. Why do you want a higher education? Why are you going to college?
32. How do you want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
33. Which interests do you want to pursue in college? Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities? Consider all of your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities. Are you most interested in career preparation, technical training or general knowledge and skills?

## **General College Information**

### **Types of Schools:**

**College:** An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two year or four year program.

**University:** An academic institution which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degree granting professional schools that are not exclusively technological (such as medicine or journalism). It is composed of a number of "schools" or "colleges," each of which encompasses a general field of study.

**Junior College:** A two-year institution of higher learning that provides career and vocational training and academic curricula (terminal and transfer). Community colleges are also two-year colleges.

- **Terminal Program:** An academic program that is complete unto itself. A student who completes it may not be admitted to a four-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements.
- **Transfer Program:** An academic program that is designed to lead into a four-year program at another college or university. The two-year graduate transfers as a junior to the four-year institution.

### **Type of Undergraduate Degrees**

**Associate in Arts:** The A.A. degree is awarded upon completion of a two-year program of study in an area of the arts and sciences at a two or four year school. If the program is designed to lead into a senior college curriculum, it is known as an academic or transfer course. If

it is complete in itself or points towards immediate employment, it is considered a terminal program.

**Associate in Science:** The A.S. degree is awarded upon completion of a two-year course of study in an engineering, technological, or scientific field. If the program is complete in itself or points to immediate employment, it is considered a terminal program, and the degree is known as A.A.S. or Associates in Applied Science.

**Bachelor of Arts:** The B.A. or A.B. degree is awarded upon completion of four years of study in an area of arts and sciences.

**Bachelor of Science:** The B.S. degree is awarded upon completion of four years of study in engineering, scientific, or technological field. Liberal Arts background requirements are considerably less than those established for granting of a B.A. degree. This degree may also be awarded for study in such fields as business administration, nursing, or education/teaching.

### **College Calendar System**

**Semester System:** The semester system divides the academic year into two periods of equal length, the first usually extending from September through December and the second from January through May. Semester examinations may occur at the end of each period.

**Trimester or 3-3-3 System:** The school year is broken into three ten week periods of study (September to mid-December, January to mid-March, and April to early June). 3-3-3 refers to a trimester system in which students take three courses each term.

**4-1-4 System:** This is an adaptation of the traditional semester system. The 4-1-4 plan schedules students for four courses in each of two three-month semesters, allowing a four-to six week period of independent study or concentrated course work in the interim. A variation of such a plan is the 4-4-2, in which the student takes four courses for two three-month periods and takes only two during the six-to-seven weeks after spring vacation.

### **Types of Programs within a College or University**

**Cooperative Education:** This is a college program in which a student alternates between semesters of full-time study and full-time employment in the student's major area. The student is paid for their work at the prevailing rate. Usually, five years are required to complete a bachelor's degree program under the cooperative plan, but the graduate has the advantage of having completed about a year's practical work experience in addition to academic studies. In some colleges, the program requires only four years by using summers as periods of work or study.

**Internship Program:** This is a program which involves study and work experience in a student's particular field of concentration. The work experience is part of the college course and the student is not paid for his work. Academic credit is given for the work. No extra

semester or period of time is added to the four-year college program. The value of the program is that it combines practical work experience with classroom learning.

**Cooperative Program:** This differs from the above-mentioned Cooperative Education. Some liberal arts colleges work in cooperation with another university that offers technical preparation for professional careers. This kind of program requires five years of study. It is often referred to as a 3-2 program, i.e. three years of liberal arts study and two years of technical study. The student who completes the program receives two bachelor's degrees (one in liberal arts and the other in science).

### **Types of Educational Programs**

**Liberal Arts College:** A four-year institution that emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. Pre-professional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.

**Business School:** Business schools fall into two categories. At some colleges it is possible to specialize in business administration or in a two-year secretarial course in conjunction with supplementary liberal arts courses. Other institutions offer business or secretarial courses primarily and may or may not be regionally accredited.

**Engineering or Technological College:** Independent professional schools that provide four-year training programs in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

**Military School:** Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Merchant Marines. These institutions (West Point, Annapolis, Air Force Academy, and Kings Point) require recommendations and nomination by U.S. Senators or U. S. Representatives. Private and state supported military institutions, however, operate on a college application basis as does the U. S. Coast Guard Academy. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentration in various aspects of military science.

**Nursing School:** There are several kinds of nursing schools. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive an R. N. diploma upon successful completion of training and a state examination. At schools affiliated with four-year colleges, students receive both a BS degree and R. N. diploma. Junior colleges and community colleges may offer a two-year nursing program. These schools confer an A. S. degree in nursing.

**Professional School:** Professional schools offer specialized study in areas such as art, music, drama, dance, photography, etc.

**Trade School:** Trade schools offer specialized training in specific work fields such as cosmetology, computer technology, medical or dental technology, culinary arts, or drafting.

### **Types of Admissions Decisions**



**Regular Admissions:** Most colleges require applications to be submitted before a specific deadline, at which time the admissions committee begins to consider the credentials of all applicants. Deviations from this pattern have become more common, however, and several of these special admissions procedures are now integral parts of the college selection vocabulary.

**Early Decision:** Some colleges follow a procedure by which a student may apply to his first choice college in October of senior year and be notified of acceptance or rejection by December. Many colleges restrict Early Decision candidates to only one application. This means, if you are an Early Decision applicant at such a college, you cannot apply for admission to other colleges before you receive the reply from the school to which you have applied for Early Decision. Some colleges allow an applicant to file applications with other colleges, but if the application under Early Decision is accepted, all applications to other colleges must be withdrawn. Candidates who are not accepted under a college's Early Decision plan are usually considered under the regular admissions procedures. An Early Decision applicant should complete ACT or SAT I and SAT II by the spring test dates of their junior year.

**Early Action:** Is very similar to Early Decision. You apply to college in October of your senior year and are notified of acceptance or rejection by December. You still have the option of applying to other schools.

**Rolling Admissions:** Most colleges utilize a system by which each applicant is notified of acceptance or rejection as soon as the application credentials are complete and the admissions committee has reviewed the application. Although each institution may have a final application deadline, a student may submit an application at any time before that date.

**Qualified Acceptance:** Occasionally an institution postpones action on an application and will suggest that the applicant pursue a particular course in its summer session. Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the college agrees to accept the student for its regular degree program at the beginning of the first or second semester.

**Waiting List:** In addition to accepting and rejecting applicants, many colleges place students on a waiting list for admission. The college is telling them that there are not enough places on campus for all of the qualified students. As accepted applicants decide to attend other colleges, the school will offer their places to students from the waiting list. Inevitably, a certain percentage of those originally accepted choose to study elsewhere, so that a percentage of those on the waiting list may receive acceptance.

## **Athletics and Admissions**

High school students must be sure they are eligible to participate in college sports by checking the NCAA regulations. In order to qualify for a Division I or II School, students must have 16 specific core courses and a minimum core grade point average. ACT or SAT scores are also used to determine eligibility and all students should submit a form to the NCAA Clearinghouse by the fall of their senior year and request a transcript from your Counselor. Applications for initial eligibility are available at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

### **Choosing a College**

**In selecting the appropriate college for yourself, you need to answer the following questions:**

#### **What kind of college do I want to attend?**

More than anything else, you go to college to get an education. The type of academic atmosphere and variety of courses studied should be considered when choosing a college.

Colleges can be ranked according to the selectivity of their admissions. For example, some colleges only take students with a B+ average and very high ACT or SAT I scores. These institutions are considered very selective in their admissions. Other colleges simply require graduation from high school, and lower ACT or SAT I scores. These colleges have lower selectivity, and some open admissions.

You should try to match your academic abilities to the college's selectivity. If you are a very good student, then a more selective college may offer you the right amount of challenge and stimulation. If your record has been weak, a less selective college may fit your needs.

Also, college offers a variety of majors, or courses of study. If you are fairly sure you want to major in business, for example, you should check the business department of the colleges you are considering. If you are unsure of what your major will be, then look for an institution that has a wide variety of majors, usually called a liberal arts college.

#### **What size school do I want?**

Colleges range in size from 150 to 80,000 students. There is a great difference between attending a small institution and a large university. Small colleges offer you more personal involvement, a community atmosphere, and small classes. Large universities tend to be more impersonal, allow you to be more anonymous, and offer class sizes of anywhere from 20 to 400 students.

#### **You should ask yourself:**

- Will I feel closed in and trapped at a small college?
- Will I welcome the personal, friendly atmosphere a small college affords?
- Will I feel lost and overwhelmed at a large institution?
- Will I feel more independent and free at a large university?
- Will I want large or small classes?

- Would I like to have a good deal of interaction with my instructors during class or would I prefer a large, more impersonal style of instruction?
- Are the athletic facilities important to me?

## **SIZE DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

### **What atmosphere do I feel most comfortable in?**

Colleges, just like any group of people working and living together, create their own atmosphere. Each college has a particular atmosphere or environment that affects the performance and satisfaction of each student there. The type of atmosphere a college offers can best be discovered by reading the catalog carefully, and, of course, by visiting the campus and talking to as many people as you can. Some factors that go into creating a college's atmosphere are:

- Personal or impersonal handling of student questions, concerns, and scheduling
- An academic or less serious mood among the students and their approach to responsibilities
- Whether the school is single sex or coeducational

### **What is the cost?**

Obviously, a major factor to be considered is the cost of attending a college. The total cost for a year, as computed by the college financial aid office, includes tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses. Total costs do vary widely.

While cost is undoubtedly very important, do not limit your choice of colleges to only those you can afford without financial assistance. Many of the more expensive private schools have solid financial aid programs, which may cover anywhere from 20% to the full cost, depending upon your determined financial need. A good plan would be to choose several colleges, including one you can afford and several for which you need aid. Although financial aid may seem uncertain at times, limiting prospective colleges on a cost basis alone may exclude some excellent colleges from your list.

### **What location do I want?**

There are many reasons why the location of the college may be important to you. You should always consider the expense of travel, the need for independence versus the desire to stay near your family, and the effects of living in a particular climate.

When considering the location of a college, think about the campus setting. The physical environment of the college you go to may be very important to you. Some people prefer the social, cultural, and economic activities of a large city or metropolitan environment. Others would be unhappy if they could not be near the ocean, mountains, or countryside. A major metropolitan area can offer many benefits, but a student must adjust to the lifestyle of a big city. A college or university that is located in the heart of a city is often

comprised of multi-storied classroom buildings and high-rise dormitories. There are also many colleges and universities that are in rural setting with widespread campuses located many miles from the nearest metropolitan areas. In addition, many institutions are located close to, but not in, large cities. The decision of a location and campus setting for your college should ultimately include those institutions where you will be most comfortable living for the next two to four years of your life.

### **What lifestyle do I want?**

A student body can be comprised of all men, all women, or both men and women. Students who may worry that they would be cloistered at a single-sex college should know that today virtually all colleges have exchange programs with other colleges whereby a student from one college may cross register at another college to take courses for credit. Also, dormitory privileges, social activities, and extracurricular involvement will vary due to the type of student body your college has on campus.

### **What special programs or services do I want?**

1. The way to answer these questions is to go through one of the college handbooks or software program (available in the guidance office). Jot down the names of any college that interests you. Then go back and read the description of the colleges on your list, crossing off a name if it does not offer programs, activities, or a location that interests you.
2. When your list is narrowed, write to the remaining colleges and ask them to send you their catalogs or view books or check the guidance office for material. Read through the catalogs thoroughly.
3. If possible, visit the schools you are interested in. Generally, small private schools encourage interviews, so your visit can be important to your chances of being accepted. The summer before your senior year is the best time for visiting. Be sure to make your appointment early. Dress up when you go--put your best foot forward. The interview is an opportunity for the college to get to know you. You should have read the catalog; and now, ask any other questions you have. If you like the interviewers, and they like you, that's a good start. Remember, you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you.
4. When you are on campus, look for such things as the number of courses in your intended major, the library resources in your field of interest, the student/faculty ratio, the availability of off-campus programs, how friendly the students are, the general campus appearance, cultural opportunities, housing, health services, sports programs, extracurricular activities, eat in the dining hall, whether the student body is residential or commuter and, finally, the cost and availability of financial aid.

### **What should your final list of colleges include?**

Generally, the guidance department recommends that a student's final list include schools from each of the following categories:

- REACH** A student's top choice schools. It is fine in this group to include a couple of "long shots."
- TARGETS** Schools that possess the significant features a student desires and at which the probability of admission is even too slightly better than even. These are categorized as "realistic" schools.
- LIKELY** Schools that have most of the features a student desires and at which the probability of admission is "highly likely" to "certain." We refer to schools in this category as a student's "safety schools."

Obviously, those schools that qualify as "reach," "targets," or "likely," vary tremendously from student to student. Each student has an individual academic profile and should select schools accordingly, making sure that choices range through all three categories. We would like to emphasize that students are continually encouraged to apply to more than one "realistic" and/or "safety" school. This will insure two or more acceptances and provide each student with some choices.

*A few points of caution:*

1. Many students spend hours deciding on their few top choices and five minutes selecting one or two safer institutions. We strongly advise that you spend as much time and consideration selecting your fifth and sixth choice schools as you do your top choice schools. Realistically, you may eventually matriculate at the fifth choice institution. While it may not be as selective and prestigious as the top choice, you should insure that it has what you are looking for and is an institution where you stand a good chance of being happy and successful. If your few top choices are small, selective liberal arts colleges, it does not make a great deal of sense to include a large, multi-dimensional university as a safety choice. If you want a small, liberal arts college, you should spend the necessary time finding a school of similar type that will qualify as a safe choice.
2. Many students feel that simply because a particular institution falls into the category "selective" as opposed to category "safe," it does not offer programs of equal quality. Such an assumption is, in many instances, incorrect! The selectivity of any institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool that in turn, may be affected as much by geographic location, popularity, and reputation as by actual academic quality. Many schools, for a variety of reasons, may be "safe" schools from an admissions perspective yet offer programs equal in quality to the student's few top choices.
3. We would like to dispel the notion that if you want to go to a good college or university, you must look at an eastern school. There are many good schools throughout the country, and we encourage you to investigate options outside of New England.

4. Many students and parents still feel that they can select any one of the various state universities as a safety choice. This is no longer the case -- if, in fact, it ever was. Students and parents must realize that state universities are becoming more and more competitive, both for in-state and out-of-state applicants.

### **Testing for College Admissions**

#### **Types of Tests:**

**American College Testing:** The ACT program is a college entrance examination that is used primarily by Midwestern and southern colleges but is accepted by all colleges and universities. It tests English, Math, Reading, and Science and an optional Writing section. The ACT is 2 hours and 55 minutes with an additional 40 minutes for the Writing section. A composite score of the four areas is given and is not affected by your writing score. Registration should be completed online at [ACTstudent.org](http://ACTstudent.org)

Next school year, ACT will introduce individual section retesting, online testing on national test dates, and superscore calculations.

The following are the test dates:

- April 17, 2021
- June 12, 2021
- July 17, 2021
- September 4, 2021
- October 23, 2021
- December 4, 2021

**PSAT/NMSQT:** The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test will be given in October to juniors and sophomores.

- Practice for the SAT 1
- Detailed results are reported in a way that helps you to see your strengths and weaknesses.
- Approximately 15,000 of the 1.2 million students who take the PSAT/NMSQT will be designated as National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.
- Tests report a EBRW, Math, and writing score on a scale extending from 160 to 760.
- The Selection Index is calculated by doubling the sum of your Reading and Math scores.
- The Selection Index is used by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation to determine candidates for the scholarship program that they administer.

**SAT :** The Scholastic Assessment Test, which is sponsored by the College Board

- You will have 3 hours plus another 50 minutes (if you are taking the Writing section)

- The test measures critical reading, math, and writing skills
- The following are test dates:
  - March 13, 2021
  - May 8, 2021
  - June 5, 2021
  - August 28, 2021
  - October 2, 2021
  - November 6, 2021
  - December 4, 2021

**SAT SUBJECT TESTS:** SAT subject tests are diagnostic measures of actual knowledge acquired in specific areas. They are given in the following different areas:

Literature	Italian	Physics
Math Level IC	Math Level IIC	Chemistry
Spanish with Listening	Spanish	Latin
US History	World History	
Biology E/M		

- These tests are one hour in length
- The scores range from 200-800.
- You should not take a SAT II subject test until you have nearly completed a subject.
- If you want to take a math SAT II test, we advise you to consult with your math teacher before deciding on taking either the Math Level IC or IIC test.
- Juniors might be interested in taking one or two of these tests in courses that they will terminate in their junior year, such as Chemistry or Modern Language.
- SAT II subject tests are offered on MOST DATES that the SAT I is administered. However, a student is not allowed to take both the SAT I and SAT II on the same date.
- You can confirm if SAT Subject is required at:  
<http://test-prep.ivywest.com/sat-subject-test-score.aspx>

**Advanced Placement Tests:** These tests are three-hour examinations based on a full year college level course taught in high school. You can read more about this test at <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse>

### Registration Procedures and Reporting Scores:

- Registration is available at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) for the SAT and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT. You must have a digital photo available when you register.
- The College Board and the American College Testing may keep all of your records in order and report your scores correctly, it is important to give your name and all other information in exactly the same way on all the forms and in all communication with both companies. Using initials one time and not the next may cause confusion and your scores may not be reported to colleges.

- Keep an account of your registration numbers for each testing date. This will be most helpful if you have to contact the testing companies at a later date.
- Only the ACT Score reports are sent to your home and to your high school.
- **Most colleges require that scores be sent to them directly from the testing companies. It is the students' responsibility to see to it that his scores are sent to the colleges that they are applying to by recording the institutions on the registration form or an additional request form.**

### **High School Code**

Notre Dame High School's **school code or CEEB number** is the following:

**070905**

### **Preparing for the ACT and the SAT**

THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR THE SAT IS TO USE THE FREE KHAN ACADEMY PREP PROGRAM. BE SURE TO LINK YOUR COLLEGE BOARD ACCOUNT WITH KHAN ACADEMY.

The ACT also has a free online resource found on their website - ACT Academy.

In many ways, you have been preparing for the ACT and the SAT during your entire school career. Doing well on the ACT or SAT is a natural result of hard work in academic courses in school and a strong interest in reading and other mentally challenging activities. Be sure that you know how the test is organized, the types of questions, the terms and concepts it uses and how it is timed/scored. You should also know some basic rules of test taking strategy, including when to guess, how to pace yourself, and so on. If you do not have this information you may be at a disadvantage in taking the test. Taking the ACT and the SAT provides this information. Students who have read it carefully and taken the full practice test that it contains have reported greater confidence, less anxiety, and more familiarity with the test than students who did not use this free booklet available in the guidance office.

### **What about Coaching Courses?**

There is a bewildering array of courses, books, and computer software programs available to help you prepare for the ACT and the SAT. Some students may improve their scores by taking these courses; others may not. Unfortunately, despite decades of research, it is still not possible to predict ahead of time who will improve and by how much--and who will not. For that reason, the College Board cannot recommend coaching courses, especially if they cost a lot or require a great deal of time and effort that could be spent on schoolwork or other worthwhile activities.

The College Board believes that the coaching that works best is the coaching that is most like hard schoolwork. If that is so, you should ask yourself whether or not you can do just as much by studying harder and taking more demanding courses.



You can, and should, ask for advice from your parents, counselors, and teachers. Talk with your friends, too. But do not rely too heavily on anecdotal evidence, especially if it is second or third hand.

If you decide to consider a course, investigate it thoroughly. Examine carefully and ask for verification of all claims of results. Weigh the investment--both in time and in money. Be sure you know what is available at school before you decide to pay for a commercial course.

And above all, ask what you can do in your regular schoolwork, in your leisure time on your own, or working with fellow students or adults to prepare for the ACT and the SAT I without distracting from other things that are important to your education and your college goals.

### **Sources of Information About Colleges**

**College View books and Catalogs:** Many colleges send copies of their viewbooks and catalogs to high school guidance departments. These are available in the Guidance Office and Library at Notre Dame. Students should write to colleges and request information be sent to them. Usually a viewbook and not a catalog will be sent with a request. Catalogues are available online.

**College Night Program:** Notre Dame sponsors a program during the month of October for our students. Over 100 colleges, universities, trade and technical schools are represented and it is a perfect time to have your individual questions answered.

**Students Attending College:** A very valuable source of information is to talk with students currently enrolled at a particular college. Graduates often return to their high schools for a visit and this affords the opportunity for a first hand appraisal of an institution.

**Computer Software:** Programs have been written for computers, which allows a student to research particular institutions or search for schools that match their particular needs. The Naviance program is available for all juniors.

**[www.succeed.naviance.com/notredamehs](http://www.succeed.naviance.com/notredamehs)**

**College Visitations:** College Representatives visit ND on a regular basis in the fall. The Calendar for these visits is available on Naviance. Students must register for these visits at that site.

**Internet:** Almost every college in the country has developed a web page .

#### **Resources on the Web**

**[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)** - College Board Online

- To complete the College Scholarship Service Profile Application (CSS Profile)
- Calculators to determine your estimated family contribution
- Scholarship information
- SAT and college admission information
- College Search

**[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)** – Preparation for the ACT

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm> - US News College Search  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) -To file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) The US Department of Education website for information on Federal Student Aid Programs  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) - A comprehensive website with a wealth of information on financial aid and scholarships  
[www.goodcall.com/scholarships/](http://www.goodcall.com/scholarships/) College and scholarship search  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) Scholarship search  
[www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) SAT preparation

### **Steps in Applying For College**

**Application:** We require that you apply to each college online. Once you electronically apply you will be able to print a confirmation sheet. Most colleges accept the Common Application (commonapp.org). The Common Application, **provides students, member institutions, and secondary schools the opportunity to submit applications (both online and in print) to any of the 700 member institutions.**

The Coalition for Access and Affordability is a newer application system that some colleges and universities use. In order to create an account go to their website:

[www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org)

In addition to the Common App and Coalition, some schools ask you to apply directly to the institution.

You will need to create YOUR account on the Common Application. This is an account that will be your entrance into applying to any college that accepts the common application (click at Explore Colleges to determine which of your colleges – typically private, but some public now use the Common Application!)

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR LINKING THE COMMON APPLICATION AND NAVIANCE CLASS OF 2022**

All students must go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and register.

- You will need to create a **User Name and Password**
- Make a note of your user name and password because you must use the same one throughout the year (you can list it in your Password document on Google Drive).
- List at least one college you plan to apply (this can be changed at a later date).
- Go to the “My Colleges” tab; click **Assign Recommenders** in the left column; click FERPA Release Authorization, read and check the box at the bottom of the page, click Continue
- On the next page check off the first box allowing us to send your transcript
- Under “Select One” check off, “I waive my rights to review...” and then the box at the bottom, “I understand that my waiver...”
- Now you are able to request teachers for recommendations on the Naviance page

Log into Naviance Family Connection

- Fill in the email address you used on Common Application
- Click **MATCH**
- Any colleges that you have listed on Common App have now been added to Naviance.

**Deadline Dates and Admission Policy:** When applying online you can save your work at the end of each session and then return to it at another time. Some colleges request that your applications be in early. You should read the directions on due dates on the applications carefully to determine the college due date.

**ALL APPLICATION CONFIRMATION SHEETS MUST BE TURNED INTO THE GUIDANCE OFFICE AND NOT MAILED TO THE COLLEGE DIRECTLY!!!!**

The following schedule MUST be followed if your application is to arrive on time. You must have the application, with all pertinent fees, recommendations, etc. to the Guidance Office **TWO WEEKS** before it is due at the college. No application will be processed if the fee does not accompany the application.

**ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE:  
The week of November 15, 2021**

**Completing The Application:** Colleges are not alike and application forms may vary significantly. A college typically collects five different kinds of information about its applicants:

- THE APPLICATION - this serves the purpose of identifying the student to the college (name, address, high school, etc.), as well as manifesting the student's personality (personal statement/essay).
- ACT, SAT and SUBJECT TEST SCORES – once you determine what test scores you are sending to your colleges you should contact the appropriate testing center and forward the scores.
- THE TRANSCRIPT - courses taken in grades 9-12 are supplied to colleges. In addition to a record of grades, the transcript shows the cumulative average and the weighted overall average.
- THE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION - this letter is written by your school counselor and can be a very meaningful and decisive part of the application.
- LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION - some colleges request that classroom teachers assess an applicant's ability. Students should ask two teachers for recommendations; one should be from their junior year.  
**If the teacher will be sending his/her recommendation electronically,** please add the teacher's name from the drop down list in Naviance -> Colleges,-> Colleges I am applying to-> Teacher Recommendation/add or cancel-> Select teacher from drop down list -> Update Request

- Recommendations from others (community leaders, influential friends, etc.) should be sent only after the student has conferred with their school counselor.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION WILL NOT BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS.

**1. Most Common ERRORS When Completing Applications**

- Allowing mistakes in grammar and spelling to slip through
- Selecting a major the institution does not offer
- Exaggerating the amount of time spent working at a job versus the time spent studying, resulting in impossible totals
- Mentioning every school sponsored activity the applicant ever had contact with, instead of only those he participated in regularly
- Failing to say in the personal essay what the applicant can contribute to the college
- Not addressing why certain grades or semesters are poor in the essay

**The College Essay**

Most college bound students approach the task of writing a personal essay for college admissions with some trepidation. First of all, the essay is important, to you and to the college. The essay is your opportunity to take charge of the information the college receives about you, and to provide information that does not appear in grades, test scores, and other materials. It allows you to reveal your intelligence, talent, sense of humor, enthusiasm, maturity, creativity, expressiveness, sincerity, and writing ability - traits that count in the admissions evaluation.

What do colleges look for?

- Your ability to use standard written English that is correctly typed, punctuated, and contains correct grammar, usage, and syntax.
- Content, substance and depth of insight, reflecting your ability to think about yourself and to convey your true feelings or opinions about a topic.
- Creativity and originality.

Tips for Writing the Essay:

Students will work on their college essay during their term one English class. Allow yourself enough time for all the steps below, and write an individual essay for each college.

Be sure you understand the college's topics, directions, and deadlines and look in its catalog or guidebook for descriptions on the personal qualities it is looking for.

Before you start your essay, jot down your aspirations and how you think the college will help you meet them. Then develop a personal inventory. Make lists of your community and school activities, your travels, awards, honors, other accomplishments, work experiences, any academic or personal shortcoming you are trying to overcome, and the personality traits you value about yourself. To focus your essay, develop a one-sentence theme from your inventory.

Think about the form you might use to convey your information. Straight prose is fine; but if your theme lends itself to another approach--be creative!

Now write the draft. Set the draft aside for 24 hours, and then reread it to spot clichés, triteness, vagueness, dullness, grammatical errors, and misspellings. Does your essay focus on your theme, or does it ramble? Is it confusing, or boring? Does the introduction "grab" the reader?

Rewrite your essay based on this evaluation and repeat the last step as often as necessary, to sharpen your essay. Reread it out loud to locate the rough spots.

Ask someone whose opinions you respect to read your essay and give you their candid impressions. Ask for specifics but do not let this person rewrite your essay.

Rewrite any necessary spots and have your English teacher review the essay.

Type your essay, unless the college requires a handwritten version, and proofread it to catch any errors.

A few colleges may allow you to send a previously written and corrected essay. Check with your college admissions officer to see if this is acceptable

Attach your essay to the Common Application.

**Sample Essay Questions Asked By Colleges On Applications:**

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. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
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.

In the past, candidates have used this space in a great variety of ways. They have written about family situations, school, or community events to which they have had strong reactions, people who have influenced them, significant experiences, intellectual interests, personal aspirations, or more generally - topics that spring from the life of the imagination. There is no "correct" way to respond to this essay request. In writing about something that matters to you, you will convey to the admissions counselors a sense of yourself.

### **The College Visit and Interview**

#### **Suggestions for the College Visit:**

If you visit before you make application or before your school reports arrive, you should take a student copy of your transcript. A copy of an unofficial transcript can be obtained in the guidance office with sufficient notice.

#### **When making an appointment for a college visit, keep the following in mind:**

1. If possible, plan time when high school is not in session, but college is.
2. In your inquiry, request a definite date and time.
3. Request an alternative time if this is inconvenient for the admissions office.
4. Unavoidable delays require a telephone call to the admissions office.
5. If you are also pursuing athletics you may want to coordinate a meeting with a Coach at the same time.

If it is at all possible, make arrangements to stay overnight in the dormitory. You can get a good sense of the student body by eating in the cafeteria and attending several classes. **BE SURE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS IN ADVANCE.**

**AVOID** a nonscheduled "drop in" to an admission office. But, if it turns out that an opportunity to visit a college at the last minute presents itself, be courteous and understanding about what the admissions staff is able to do for you. Sometimes you are able to join a tour. Rarely, you may find an interview time is available. However, dropping in is discouraged and is not a productive way to visit a college.

#### **Timetable for College Visits**

1. Visit colleges starting as early as April of your junior year.
2. Return in the fall to those you are most interested in for a day of visiting classes, talking to students, staying overnight, etc.
3. In order for you to have the best choice, a good rule of thumb is to call 3 weeks ahead of time, and this is if you plan to visit in June. For every month after that, add two weeks, for example, 4-6 weeks for July, 6-8 weeks for August, etc. College interview and tour spots fill up remarkably fast. The more popular colleges are often full through January and stop scheduling interviews in August.
4. Using a map, plan your trip roughly to visit 2 colleges per day.

5. It is always nice to visit when a college is in session, but the demands of the Fall of senior year do not always make that practical or possible. A summer visit is generally more relaxed. Not only do you have more time, but the admission staff often does also. Save the return, comprehensive, overnight visit in the Fall for your very few favorites. While overnight lodging and class visits are being offered at more and more colleges, not all do so. Do not assume that it will be available.
6. If you would like to see a coach or faculty member in an area of interest, mention that when you call. Colleges do their best to accommodate you with these requests.
7. Pick up an application and financial aid forms if they are available.

### **Interview Process**

1. Learn as much as possible about the college before your visit. Be prepared both to answer and ask questions.
2. Give some advance thought to the things you want to look for and ask about. Having a list of questions with you is acceptable.
3. Go alone rather than with a friend or group. Mom and Dad go along for the drive, but they do not participate in the admissions interview. Parents are sometimes invited to speak with the representative following the interview.
4. Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
5. Be yourself at all times--be honest, sincere, interested.
6. Know your background and experience. Be prepared to present it in an orderly manner. An opening question may be "Tell me about yourself."
7. Be prepared to tell why you have chosen this particular college and what you expect to get out of your four years.
8. Be ready to answer questions about your ACT or SAT I scores, latest grades, and courses you have taken.
9. Smile. Speak distinctly. Look at the interviewer when you are speaking.
10. State and defend opinions only if asked. Do not be argumentative. If you do not know something, admit it. Do not try to bluff.
11. APPEARANCE: DRESS NEATLY, no jeans.
12. Relax! Interviews are meant to be informative to both parties. Try to get as much out of the interview as you put into it.
13. Thank your interviewer for his or her time and consideration.

### **Some Questions to ask at the College Visit:**

Visit the college in session so that you will be able to talk not only with admissions officers, but also with the students who attend the colleges. Some questions you might wish to have answered:

1. What are the strongest departments at the college?
2. What sizes are classes generally? For freshmen? For upperclassmen?
3. How do I compare academically with students already attending this school?
4. What do students do after they graduate? Do they go on to postgraduate studies? What percentage are employed upon graduation?
5. What kinds of cultural, sports, literary activities are offered on campus?
6. Must one join specific organizations to be a part of the campus life or is there room to be included in other ways?

7. What percentage of students remain on campus during weekends?
8. What kinds of living accommodation are there? Dorms? Foreign language houses? Private apartments? What percentage of students live off campus?
9. Can freshmen select their own roommates?
10. Are sports available for the average player? Ask about specific activities that interest you.
11. What kind of student is generally the most successful or happiest at this college?
12. What percentage of the students receive financial aid?
13. How much importance is placed on social activities and other extracurricular activities?
14. How large is the library? What are its special features or resources?
15. What support services are available to students? Counseling? Post-graduation planning? Free health care? Tutoring if needed? Help finding off-campus employment during the school year and during the summer? Junior year abroad or at another U. S. institution?
16. What is the institutional policy and commitment to ethnic or cultural diversity?

### **Questions Students are Asked on a College Interview**

1. How did you first hear about our college?
2. What are your career goals? Long range and short term goals?
3. Why are you interested in majoring in . . . . ?
4. What kinds of things do you do outside of school?
5. What accomplishments have you achieved or activities have you participated in that have had a particular effect on you and your life?
6. What might you be interested in as a future profession?
7. What are your academic strengths and weaknesses?
8. How familiar are you with this college and its programs?
9. Which one of your activities has given you the most satisfaction?
10. If you had high school to do over again, would you do anything differently?
11. What particular "life goals" are you seeking to achieve or pursue?
12. What are your priorities in selecting a college?
13. How would you describe your high school and how would you change it?
14. Where do you see yourself in four years?
15. Discuss your most stimulating intellectual experience.
16. Tell me about something you have really wanted which you had to go after on your own.
17. What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
18. What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking?
19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?

### **Interview Follow Up**

Make notes on the interview and the college as soon as possible after the appointment.

You should make notes on the following:

- Likes
- Dislikes
- Important points to remember
- Name and title of the interviewer



Write or email a letter of appreciation to the interviewer for the following reasons:

- To show thoughtfulness, courtesy, and maturity
- It reinforces the admissions counselor's memory of you as an individual

### **Financial Aid**

Early in the senior year students should be sure to check the financial aid deadlines and the forms required by each college they are considering. Students should pursue all sources of financial aid; counselors and college financial aid officers can offer important suggestions and advice. Our guidance department will sponsor a financial aid workshop for parents and students in October.

Students interested in applying for financial aid should acquire the Financial Aid Forms F.A.F.S.A. and the CSS PROFILE online, complete it with his parents, and submit it to the College Scholarship Service (CSS) and the federal government. The forms contain questions concerning student and parent income and asset information. Comprehensive instructions are provided for completion of the form. Income and expense items correspond with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) references and definitions. Many colleges require that their own application be completed and that families submit complete copies of their federal income tax return.

### **Definition of Need**

Colleges review the information you provide to determine your family contribution and financial need. The family contribution includes a parent contribution, student income contribution, and student contribution from assets and/or benefits. Your family's income, assets, debts, family size and extenuating circumstances are considered when determining the family contribution. Parents with special or unusual circumstances should discuss their situation with the financial aid officer at the colleges to which their sons are applying.

Financial need is the difference between what it will cost a student to attend a college and the family contribution. After your financial need has been determined, most colleges will award financial aid as a "package". The package may include a combination of scholarship or grant (money that does not have to be paid back), loan (to be paid back after the student leaves college), and campus employment (money earned while in school and sometimes related to the student's field of study).

One important point to remember is that financial need will usually increase as college costs increase. You should compare the types of financial aid offered by the colleges you are considering. If you need assistance, speak with your counselor or call the colleges directly.

### **Sources of Financial Aid**

There are two types of financial aid: need based and merit based. Need based forms of financial aid are the major portion of assistance available for post-secondary education. Eligibility for need based aid is determined by the difference between the cost of attendance and the family

contribution. Merit based aid is generally given to students in recognition of special skills, talent and/or academic ability.

There are two types of need based assistance: grant aid and self-help. Grant aid does not have to be repaid and does not require a service commitment. Self-help assistance includes loans (which require repayment) and employment (a part time job usually within the institution). There are primarily four sources of grant aid and self help: federal, state, institutional, and private.

**Federal:** The federal government is the largest single source of student financial aid funds. The programs include Pell Grants, Stafford Student Loans (SSL), Parent Loans to Undergraduate Students (PLUS), and Supplemental Loans to Students (SLS). Other sources include three campus based programs: Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Perkins Loans (formerly National Direct Student Loans), and College Work Study. Institutions are allocated funds for each of the campus based programs. The amount of funds for the Pell Grant and campus based programs are determined annually by Congress.

**State:** State sources of aid are usually administered through a state agency and include grants and scholarships, loans, and work.

**Institutional:** Institutional sources of aid are provided and controlled by the college or university. They may include grants or scholarships, loans, and campus employment.

**Private:** Private sources of aid are derived from community organizations, foundations, professional associations, community lending institutions, and parents' employers. Need is usually considered but other factors may be considered when determining your eligibility. A separate application is usually required for these programs. Check with the guidance office or note the weekly bulletin posted at [www.notredamehs.com](http://www.notredamehs.com). The local library sometimes also has a listing or information concerning local scholarship programs.

Many colleges also provide a variety of payment plans and loan options for parents. Your parents should consult with the financial aid office of the school to which you are applying for details.