

Sodus High School

College Planning Handbook

2006-2007

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An Overview of the College Decision-Making Process

At this point in your high school career, there are many questions you may be asking yourself regarding college decision-making. What do I like? What kind of career do I want to pursue? Can my family and I afford the costs of a college education? Will I attend a college in or out-of-state? Why do I want to go to college in the first place? These are just a few of many questions to which you are searching for answers. The question you may be asking now is: Where do I begin? The purpose of this college handbook is to help you understand what resources are available and to provide you with a method for making some of these decisions.

The process of making decisions about college appears complex; this handbook attempts to clarify the college decision-making process by identifying nine steps for you to consider. The nine steps include the following: self-assessment, researching colleges, admission requirements, entrance exams, making a decision, college applications, college visitations, financial-aid and the final acceptance procedures. This chapter will give a brief overview of the entire process. Later in this handbook, each of the nine steps is explained in further detail. As you have questions regarding each of these steps, consult the chapter, which gives more specific information on the topic you are investigating or discuss any concerns you may have with your counselor.

STEP 1: SELF ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is a way of acknowledging your abilities, interests, and values as they are right now. One activity that can help you is completing the worksheets, which are found in Chapter One. Another way is to take some time to read books or resources that will help you discover who you are and what you want out of college. Once you have done some thinking about who you are and what is important to you, you should be ready to begin researching colleges in step two.

STEP 2: RESEARCHING COLLEGES

Use books and other resources to begin researching different private or public colleges, which will meet the needs, abilities, and interests, which you identified in the self-assessment. The counseling office has a variety of materials, which can help you investigate colleges, which can meet your educational, or career oriented goals. These resources include the Choices computer program, college search on the Internet, college catalogs, and college and career information books. Chapter Two gives detailed information on the various resources, which are available. The counseling office can assist you or your parents in researching colleges.

STEP 3: EXAMINE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The resources you have consulted in Chapter Two can help you in finding a match between the selectivity of the college you are considering and your academic record. Your high school course work and grades are factors considered by most colleges. Chapter Three has detailed information regarding college admissions. Standardized test scores can also make a difference in the college(s) that may admit you. Other data, such as essays, extracurricular activities and letters of recommendation are important to some colleges or universities.

STEP 4: COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

Standardized tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT1) or the American College Testing (ACT) examination are required by many colleges. Chapter Four contains specific information about college entrance exams. Consult one of the resources in the counseling office to find out which examination(s), if any, your prospective colleges require.

STEP 5: COLLEGE VISITS

The college videos available in the library can be helpful in giving you an idea of what college may be like, but there is no substitute for an actual visit to the college campus. The counseling office suggests that you plan college visits over the summer or during school breaks. Many colleges hold open houses at various times during the year. The counseling office can assist you in arranging an appointment with a college for a visit.

STEP 6: MAKING A DECISION

The list of colleges you are interested in attending should be narrowed. The counseling office suggests that you apply to at least one college that will most probably accept you. You may also want to consider applying to some more selective colleges so that you will have a choice among colleges that best meet your needs. Once you have narrowed your list of colleges, you will be ready for the next step, which is applying to colleges.

STEP 7: APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Often there is more to applying to college than filling out an application. Many colleges require letters of recommendation or an essay. The college research information found in college catalogs, resource books or the Choices computer program can give you specific information needed to apply to colleges. The counseling office can help you with any questions you or your parents may have about the application process.

STEP 8: FINANCIAL AID

There are federal, state and local financial aid resources available as well as scholarships and loan programs. You will want to talk to your parents about any financial aid, which may be available from any organizations they belong to or from their employers. You will also want to investigate any part-time employment or work-study opportunities at the colleges you are considering. You should also discuss with your parents the amount of contribution they may be planning to make toward your education. Financial aid information and applications are available in the counseling office. Talk to your counselor if you have any questions regarding college financial aid.

STEP 9: ACCEPTING OR DECLINING ADMISSIONS

This is a critical time in your planning for the future. You will want to consider all the factors in making your final decision. The college you will attend should be a good match to your plans for college major, location, costs, financial aid, size, facilities, and any other factors important to you. Discuss your concerns with your parents and your counselors to ensure you are making the choice that will best meet your needs.

The following chapters detail the nine steps, which are briefly outlined here. Keep in mind that there are a variety of resources and people that are willing to help you plan for the future. Do not hesitate to talk to your parents, teachers, friends, or your counselor when you have questions about planning or preparing for college.

CHAPTER ONE

Self-Assessment

There are at least three components of self-assessment that you will want to examine to gain a better understanding of yourself. These components include your abilities, interests and values. As you begin to identify these aspects about yourself, you can consider college majors or careers that will match your preferences. Worksheets in this chapter are designed to help you begin this process. The first component to examine is your abilities.

Your academic abilities are well documented. You may want to contact the counseling office to set up an appointment with your counselor to review your achievement and aptitude scores. There are other abilities you possess which are not as well documented. Are you an aspiring writer? Are you an accomplished athlete? Maybe you are a musician? Are you a math whiz? Do you like scientific research? Do you have artistic ability? Are you good at working with your hands? The worksheets on the following page can help you answer some of the preceding questions.

Abilities Worksheet

To examine your abilities you will want to rate yourself on each of the following questions. Put a checkmark in the box, which best describes how you evaluate yourself.

<u>Abilities</u>	<u>Rating</u>		
	Causes Me Difficulty	I do Reasonably Well	I do Very Well
Verbal Ability; using words to persuade, write and speak.	[]	[]	[]
Clerical Ability: Noticing and organizing details.	[]	[]	[]
Mechanical Ability: Ability to understand how things work and are put together.	[]	[]	[]
Spatial Ability: Looking at flat drawings and being able to imagine them in three dimensions.	[]	[]	[]
Physical Coordination: Moving eyes, hands or body together to perform tasks rapidly or in a correct sequence.	[]	[]	[]
Social Ability: Ability to listen carefully and get along and express yourself.	[]	[]	[]
Creative Ability: Ability to produce artwork, sculpture, music or to be imaginative.	[]	[]	[]
Numerical Ability: Ability to solve math problems, work with numbers, or use a calculator.	[]	[]	[]
Investigative Ability: Ability to gather information in a systematic way	[]	[]	[]
Managerial Ability: Ability to plan and develop a project including coordination of people, resources and details.	[]	[]	[]

Abilities and Interest Summary

The following worksheet will help you to prioritize the abilities and interests, which are most important to you. List the abilities that you selected on the abilities worksheet from the most important to the least important. Then list the interests from the interest worksheet in order of important to you. This information will be helpful to you when you write your essay for college admission, which will be covered later in this handbook.

Most Important Abilities

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Somewhat Important Abilities

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Least Important Abilities

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Most Important Interests

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Somewhat Important Interests

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Least Important Interests

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Values Worksheet

A third component in self-assessment is examining values. The following are job values that you will want to consider when thinking about choosing a career or college major. Listed below are fourteen job values, which you may want to consider. Place a checkmark next to the job values, which are most important to you.

- Job Security - Having a steady job from which you are unlikely to be fired.
- Prestige - Having a job that gives you a great deal of status and respect.
- Good Salary - Being well paid for your work
- High Achievement - Being able to do things of importance or to succeed on a job that is difficult.
- Routine Activity - Work that is uncomplicated and organized with the same tasks repeated frequently.
- Variety-Diversion - Having the chance to do many different things and not doing boring work.
- Creativity - Having a job where you can use your imagination and be inventive.
- Working with your Mind - Work that offers intellectual stimulation and allows use of your mental capabilities.
- Independence - Work that lets you be your own boss, following your own convictions, and do the job the way you want without someone watching over you.
- Working with People - Working in close contact with people, being able to comfort and assist others.
- Leadership - Being responsible for and managing the work of others and making decisions affecting others.
- Physical Activity - Work that calls for moving about and using physical strength.
- Working under Supervision - Working under the direction of others, being told what to do.
- Work with your Hands - Having a job where you can use your hands, machines, or tools to make or repair things.

Having checked your most important values, now prioritize your top five by numbering them one to five.

The Choices computer program in the computer lab has an interest checklist, which can help you to determine what career areas best fit the abilities, interests and values that are important to you. This computer program asks you a series of questions about preferences you have regarding occupational tasks and duties. The results can be printed on paper and will give you information on your skills and interests and how they relate to 12 career areas in the Choices program. These 12 career areas include artistic, scientific, nature, authority, mechanical, industrial, business detail, persuasive, accommodating, humanitarian, social/business, and physical performing. This program prints out a list of possible occupations, which you may want to investigate further. Also included is information on what education is needed to enter certain careers. The printout of occupations can also be used to investigate other resources for career information. The counseling office has occupational reference books such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook, which are available for your use.

Researching careers is a helpful way of determining a career or a college major. You may have researched possible college majors and not made a decision. This is not uncommon. Some liberal arts colleges will allow you to enter as an undeclared major if you are still undecided at the time you accept admission. Two-thirds of college students change career plans at least once during college. If you do have ideas regarding potential college majors or careers at this time, you can list them here.

Possible College Majors

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Possible Career Areas

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Planning for college is easier if you break the process down into steps and attempt to accomplish small goals on a timely basis. The rest of this chapter gives you guidelines to consider throughout high school.

JUNIOR YEAR

September

- Visit the counseling office and become more familiar with the resources and services available such as the Choices Computer Program, college catalogs, college reference books, videos and the Internet.
- Obtain PSAT registration information and review materials. Use this to practice for the PSAT/NMSQT exam given in October.
- Maintain or improve academic performance since colleges look closely at junior year grades as a basis for college admission.
- Attend college representative visits in the counseling office. Dates for visitations are often posted outside the counseling office and are announced on the morning announcements the day the representative visits.

October

- Register for and take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which is given in mid-October at Sodus High School. See your counselor if you have any questions about the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Make plans to attend college nights, which are held at local malls, schools and colleges.
- Attend college representative visits at the counseling office.
- Talk to friends, parents, teachers and your counselor about college plans. Review College catalogs to begin thinking about which type of college you would like to attend.
- If you plan to major in art or architecture, begin to prepare a portfolio.
- If you plan to participate in Division I or II Athletics in college, you need to register with the NCAA Clearing House. See your counselor for application information and procedures.

November

- E-mail or write to colleges that offer programs in which you are interested.
- Attend college representative visits in the counseling office.

December

- Your counselor will meet with you to explain your PSAT scores. Review and correct the questions you got wrong using the Score Report. Talk to your counselor if you have any questions about interpreting your test scores.

January

- Prepare for the SAT examination by planning to take the SAT preparation course which may be offered evenings at the Sodus High School or by reviewing yourself individually. SAT preparation books may be purchased from any area bookstore and are available for use in the library.
- Review college catalogs and materials; plan for college campus visits this spring.
- Study for your mid-term exams. Your grades are an important factor in college entrance decisions.

February

- Use the Choices computer program and/or the Internet to continue your college search. The counseling office has reference books, which can be used to help narrow your search.
- Pick up a copy of Taking the SAT or Taking the ACT Assessment and familiarize yourself with the tests by taking the practice tests and scoring them yourself. Check to see if the colleges you are considering require the SAT or ACT for admission. See your counselor if you are unsure about taking either or both tests.
- If you are interested in attending any of the military academies, see the counseling office about the application procedure. You should also begin the process of applying for ROTC scholarships if you are interested.

March

- Ask your parents to attend the College Information Night offered at Sodus High School.
- Obtain registration forms for the ACT exam and/or the SAT exam from the counseling office. Be sure to mail registration materials before the deadlines found in these brochures.
- Register to take the SAT II in June if you know you will be applying to a college that requires them. Contact the counseling office if you are unsure about which tests you should take.

April

- Take the ACT exam if required by any of the colleges you are considering. Take a practice test as a review prior to the exam to reacquaint yourself with this test.
- Plan to visit colleges during spring break. Most colleges are in session at this time, so it will give you an opportunity to visit while classes are in session.
- Participate in the SAT review class, if interested. The high school library has SAT review books available with include practice exams that you can take and self-score. Familiarize yourself with the test so that you will be ready to take it next month.

May

- Take the SAT test.
- Use the self-assessment you completed earlier in this handbook as a basis to think about what factors are important to you in searching for a college.
- Apply for a summer job or investigate summer programs. The counseling office has information on summer programs to which you can apply.

June

- Prepare for your final exams. Colleges will look closely at your high school grades in determining admissions.
- If required by the colleges you are investigating, take the SAT II in subjects you will not continue during your senior year.
- Review your ACT and/or SAT tests results. Make an appointment with your counselor if you have any questions about these tests or about your college search and preparation.

July/August

- Plan College visits over the summer. If you want to attend an out-of-state college, summer is a good time to plan a visit. Some colleges allow prospective students and their families the opportunity to stay overnight on campus. Check with the colleges you are considering to see what is available during the summer.
- E-mail or write to colleges for applications for the fall if you feel you have narrowed your choices.

SENIOR YEAR

September

- Make an appointment with your counselor to discuss graduation requirements and post-high school plans. Talk to your parents about your plans and write down any questions you have before seeing your counselor.
- Plan to take the SAT and/or ACT if you have not already taken them. If you think you can improve your scores, plan to take them again this fall. Make sure that you meet the registration deadlines.
- Contact colleges you are interested in attending for applications and information. The counseling office can assist you in obtaining and preparing your application before they mail it out for you.
- Attend college representative meetings in the counseling office. Be prepared to ask questions when you attend.

- Mark your calendar for test application deadlines, test dates, college application deadlines, financial aid deadlines, and scholarship deadlines. If you are applying for early decision, be sure to get your application out as soon as possible.
- Maintain or improve grades during your senior year. Colleges look unfavorably upon falling grades.
- File an application for any required College Entrance Test you still need to take. Make sure that you take any test, which your prospective college requires. If you miss the deadline or take the wrong test, your college application could be delayed.

October

- Look for scholarships for free money to attend college. Refer to websites listed in this handbook and scholarship lists sent out from the Guidance Office. Pay attention to criteria and deadlines when applying for scholarships.
- Plan to attend college fairs and college nights in the area. Visit the counseling office when college representatives from schools you may be attending are scheduled. Check with the counseling office for dates and times for visits.
- Register for SAT II subject test(s) if the colleges you are applying to require them.
- If you need letters of recommendation, ask teachers, coaches, or employers who know you well to write one. Be sure you give them at least two to three weeks before the deadline to write the recommendation. Be sure to thank them for their efforts!
- Begin working on an outline for your college essay if your school requires it. Refer to the section in this handbook on writing college essays for tips and suggestions.
- Make arrangements for college visitations or interviews with admissions counselors over the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.
- Begin preparing any supplements you may need for your applications such as an art portfolio or music auditions as required by the college.

November

- If you do not have all your applications completed, finalize them and submit them to the counseling office. Complete any outstanding college applications before the Thanksgiving break.
- Ask a teacher or your counselor to proofread and critique your college essays.
- Submit your college applications to the counseling office well in advance of your application deadlines.
- Consider taking the SAT and/or ACT for the last time. Make sure the test scores are sent to the colleges to which you have applied.
- Check the testing dates for the ROTC Scholarships and Service academies if you are interested in attending.

December

- If necessary, take your final SAT II this month.
- Attend the Financial Aid Night at Sodus High School. Be prepared to ask any questions you need to finalize your financial aid applications.
- Check with the college financial aid office to see which financial aid form your college requires. Most colleges require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Tuition Assistance Program (TAP for NYS schools) and/or the CSS/Financial Aid Profile.
- The counseling office has the FAFSA and CSS Profile applications as well as a book which indicates which form is required by the college you have selected. Have your family complete the form so it can be mailed after January 1st. Ask your parents to check with any club or organization to which they belong that may offer college scholarships.
- If you applied for early decision and have not been accepted, file your other college applications immediately. This rejection does not mean this college will not accept you later in the spring, but if you are accepted by other colleges, you will have a choice for which college you will attend next fall. Attend the Financial Aid Night at Sodus High School. Be prepared to ask any questions you need to finalize your financial aid applications.

January

- Mail the required financial aid application as soon as possible after January 1st. Apply for financial aid, even if you do not think you are eligible. There are sources of financial aid available regardless of family income such as an unsubsidized Federal Perkins Loan, the unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan or the Parent Loan to Undergraduate Students (PLUS).
- Submit any supplements to your application such as your art portfolio or music audition tape, as required by your college. You may also need to set up interviews or auditions to be considered for acceptance to certain colleges or programs. Check with the colleges for those requirements.
- Study for your mid-term exams. Good grades can help you to be accepted.

February

- Talk to your parents and your counselor about which colleges have accepted or rejected your application. If you are on a waiting list, talk to your counselor about strategies for being accepted for admission.
- Make plans to visit any colleges you have not visited over spring break. Contact the college to arrange for a tour or to visit while classes are in session.
- Fill out application for Desmond-Wilkes Scholarship for graduating Sodus High School students. The deadline is March 1st.

March

- March 1st is deadline for Desmond-Wilkes Scholarship application.
- Concentrate on keeping your grades up. College admission officers often check on applicant's grades as a factor in admitting students.
- Continue to investigate any scholarship or financial aid possibilities. Some area employers offer scholarships to students entering particular fields of study.

April

- Talk to your parents and counselor about schools, which have accepted you. When you have made a decision, send an acceptance letter to that school. Notify the other schools that had accepted you that you will not be attending. Once you accept admission, make sure that you meet all deadlines for that particular college's admissions requirements.

May

- Inform your counselor of your final decision for the colleges you are attending.
- Determine which local community scholarships you are eligible for, and complete the necessary applications.
- Send your acceptance deposit by the deadline or you could forfeit your acceptance.
- Keep your grades up since your acceptance to college is based on the successful completion of your high school career.
- Contact the counseling office if you have not been accepted by any of the colleges to which you applied. Your counselor can help you explore some other possibilities that you may not have considered.

June

- Check with your college to make sure all the necessary forms have been submitted.
- Make sure the counseling office knows your final decision so your final transcript will be sent to your college.
- Graduate with the best academic record you can achieve.

There are many important aspects to consider in making college plans. Please remember that help is available from your parents, the counseling office, teachers, classmates, employers in the community, and from resource books in the library or in the counseling office at school. Some suggested reading regarding self-assessment includes the following:

* Morrill, Richard L 1980. Teaching Values in College. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

* Ross, Skip, with Carole C. Carlson. 1983. Say Yes to Your Potential. Waco, TX: Word Books.

CHAPTER TWO

Researching and Investigating Your Options

There are many resources available to assist you in researching and investigating your options in planning for college. The counseling office at Sodus High School has a variety of materials to assist you in beginning your college search which include the following:

CHOICES Computer Software: Choices is a computer program that is installed on the computers in both labs, the library and the counseling office. This is a very easy program to use. In only a few minutes, you can research occupations, colleges and scholarships. This program can also be used to compile your accomplishments, complete an interest inventory and record your employability skills. It is highly recommended that you use this valuable tool for all of these tasks. It will greatly simplify your vocational, college and scholarship search efforts. Your counselor, the computer room monitor or librarian can help you get started with this program.

Websites and CD ROM's: Many websites are available to research colleges, scholarships, majors, careers and occupations. Websites can be accessed by the school computers. CD ROM's are available in the Guidance Office and the Library.

College Catalog Library: College catalogs from two and four-year colleges are available for New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania colleges, as well as for colleges throughout the United States. They are listed alphabetically for quick reference. A sign-out log is used if you wish to take these catalogs home to review with your parents.

Resource Books: Among the resources available in the counseling office are the following: Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges, The College Handbook, Chronicle Two-Year and Four-Year Databooks, Chronicle Vocational School Manual and Vocational-Technical Schools. Any of these books can help you investigate colleges in which you may be interested.

College Visitation Schedule: The counseling office maintains a calendar of college representative visits. Please contact the office periodically to see if a college in which you are interested in is planning a visit.

Career Education Literature: Occupational Outlook and many other career books and resource materials are available for your use.

Military Career Information: There are brochures and information books available regarding careers in the Armed Forces. Recruiters are available if you would like to schedule an appointment.

College Entrance Testing Materials: There are preparation books and registration materials available in the counseling office and school library for the PLAN, PSAT, SAT I, SAT II and ACT. Be sure to apply for these tests before the deadlines. Missing a required test could delay your entry to college.

WEBSITES

www.act.org

www.collegeboard.org - College Board College & Financial Aid information

www.mapping-your-future.org/ - Career, college & financial aid

www.wuny.edu - State University of New York – college information

www.fastweb.com/ - Fastweb – Scholarship database

www.finaid.org/ - US Educational Dept. – Financial aid

www.ed.gov/ - US Education Dept. – US DEA – Student guide

www.fafsa.ed.gov - FAFSA – Federal Financial Aid

www.hesc.com - NYS Higher Ed – financial aid

www.collegeview.com - College view – college info

www.kbr.be/fulbright/univ/list/newyork.html - NY Colleges

www.kbr.be/fulbright/links.index.htmk - college information links

www.nysfaaa.org

www.ncaa

COLLEGE CATALOGS

Here are some factors to consider when reading college catalogs:

Date - Check to make sure that the catalog is the most recent one published. The counseling office can assist you in obtaining the most recent issue.

Table of Contents - Review the table of contents to get an idea what information is available in the catalog.

Index - Find specific information quickly by referring to the index.

College History - You can get an idea what a college is like by reading about the college's history and tradition. A particular college's history does not tell much about its current programs. It does give a notion of how its history and traditions have made it the institution it is today.

Admissions Requirements - Examine these carefully to ensure that you qualify. If you can take additional courses in your junior or senior year to strengthen your application, you should consider this possibility. If you do not meet these requirements, do not assume that the college will not accept you. Many colleges make exceptions for students based on unusual circumstances or special talents. Talk to your counselor if you have any questions or concerns about college admissions.

Application Procedures - Most catalogs list application procedures, deadlines, fees, and dates for required entrance examinations. If you are applying for early decision, be sure to submit your application to the counseling office a few weeks ahead so all materials can be submitted before the deadline.

College Fees - When comparing costs between different colleges, be sure to take all the fees into consideration. The fees may appear small but, when added to other expenses, they can quickly add up.

Living and Travel Expenses - These are estimates determined by the college for an average student. Your costs can vary depending on how you plan to travel and the location of the college from home. Find out if these estimates are minimums and take your own spending habits into consideration when looking at expenses.

Graduation Requirements - These may seem insignificant at this time, but it will be important in selecting courses to complete your degree. Planning to have a field experience or an internship during your program or wanting to go on an exchange program as part of your college experience is important considerations in narrowing down your list of colleges.

Courses - Take a close look at the course offerings to make sure that the courses look interesting and challenging enough for you. Keep in mind that you will be taking courses in disciplines other than your major to comply with graduation requirements.

Faculty - Most catalogs list the faculty of the college alphabetically near the back of the catalog and list where they completed their B.A., M.A., and doctoral degrees. This is an important consideration in choosing a college since you will be instructed by many of these professors during your college education.

Accreditation - The college catalog indicates what accreditation agency has approved its programs. This is important to consider if you think you will transfer from one school to another. You can lose college credit going from an unaccredited school to another and may have to take more courses to earn your degree. It is especially important that the school be accredited if you are going to a professional school that specializes in particular degrees such as nursing, engineering or education.

Size - It is important to note the size of the school's student population since this will affect the student-to-teacher ratio as well as the number of buildings and availability of housing.

Location - This is particularly important since you will probably be travelling during breaks and between semesters. Some colleges close student housing when classes are not in session, so you will need to keep this in mind when selecting a college.

Access to Church Facilities - Some colleges offer religious services on campus. Check the catalog to see what is available in the college community or off-campus if you wish to attend church services.

Special Programs or Services - Look for special programs for gifted or talented students, early decision, early admission, approved foreign study programs, or special provisions if you are handicapped or have an individual need.

Student Activities - If attending or participating in sports is of interest to you, check the college catalog to see what is available. You may also want to consider other extracurricular activities, which are offered at the college.

Scholarships and Loans - Find out if the college offers scholarships or financial assistance for which you may qualify.

Special Services - Check to see what health services, tutorial assistance, or student support services are available at the college.

Entrance Requirements - Examine the minimum requirements for entry to the college. Determine whether you qualify for the college or if you should consider another school, which has requirements closer to your qualifications.

Cost - Consider whether you and your family will be able to afford the costs of attending the school. Take into account any financial aid or assistance the college can offer you such as work-study programs, grants or loan programs.

Facilities - Determine the condition of housing and facilities on campus. Find out if the library is suitable for the program you plan to study or what the science lab facilities are like. Think about whether you prefer large lecture halls or a smaller classroom setting.

Student Population - The type of college will affect the composition of the college population. If you attend a community college, chances are the other students will be from the local community and have a background similar to yours. A large university can attract students from all over the United States and from foreign countries and typically has a diverse population of students.

Fraternities and Sororities - You may want to consider how many of these organizations are on campus and the effect they have on campus life. The decision to join a fraternity or sorority is a personal one that could have an impact on your college career.

COLLEGE AFFILIATION: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

Colleges are categorized as either public or private depending on their affiliation. If a college receives funding from the state's government, it is a public college. Public colleges typically offer a lower tuition cost to in-state students since the family's tax dollars help support the college. Colleges, that do not receive state funding, are called private colleges. Their sources of financial support are largely through tuition costs, endowments and private donations. Although private colleges usually have a higher tuition cost, they tend to offer more grants and scholarships in their financial aid packages.

SUNY SCHOOLS

In New York State, the public colleges are called the State University of New York (SUNY). SUNY was created in 1948 to make the dream of obtaining a college education available to many students who previously could not afford the cost of attending college. There are 64 college campuses in New York State, which make up the SUNY system. A student can seek vocational or technical training, a two-year certificate program, a four-year baccalaureate degree, or continue on to a graduate or doctoral degree. The campuses are located in a variety of rural, suburban, and urban settings and have programs that can meet your educational goals. The counseling library has catalogs for most of the following colleges and universities. The 64 colleges and universities, which comprise the SUNY system, are as follows:

Four University Centers

Often referred to as research centers, the four universities are moderately large, residential campuses with undergraduate colleges and graduate schools. Undergraduate students enroll in programs leading to a bachelor's degree in liberal arts or sciences. Master's and doctoral degrees are also available.

The Four University Centers are:

- SUNY at Albany, Albany, NY
- SUNY at Binghamton, Binghamton, NY
- SUNY at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY (University of Buffalo)
- SUNY at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY

Thirteen Colleges of Arts and Science

The 13 four-year colleges vary in size, enrolling from 3,600 to 12,000 students. These colleges offer a bachelor's or master's degree in liberal arts and sciences.

The thirteen Colleges of Arts and Science are:

- *SUNY at Brockport, Brockport, NY
- *SUNY at Buffalo College, Buffalo, NY (Buffalo State)
- *SUNY at Cortland, Cortland, NY
- *Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, NY
- *SUNY at Fredonia, Fredonia, NY
- *SUNY at Geneseo, Geneseo, NY
- *SUNY at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
- *SUNY at Old Westbury, Old Westbury, NY
- *SUNY at Oneonta, Oneonta, NY
- *SUNY at Oswego, Oswego, NY
- *SUNY at Plattsburgh, Plattsburgh, NY
- *SUNY at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY
- *SUNY at Purchase, Purchase, NY

Seven Specialized Colleges

The specialized colleges, five of which are located on private university campuses under unusual cooperative arrangements, serve students with specialized education or career goals. Programs lead to a bachelor's degree and, in many instances, offer opportunities for students to pursue graduate degrees.

The seven Specialized Colleges are:

- * New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- * New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
- * State University College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, NY
- * New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- * State University Maritime College, Bronx, NY
- * New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- * College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Five Centers for the Health Sciences

The centers for the health sciences train professionals in a multitude of health-related fields from physical therapy to biochemical research and medicine. Buffalo and Stony Brook are integral parts of university centers.

The five Health Science Centers are:

- College of Optometry, New York, NY
- Health Science Center at Brooklyn, Brooklyn, NY
- Health Science Center at Buffalo University, Buffalo, NY
- Health Science Center at Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY
- Health Science Center at Syracuse, Syracuse, NY

Eight Colleges of Technology

The colleges of technology encompass eight campuses - two agricultural and technical colleges, four colleges of technology, an upper-division college, and the Fashion Institute of Technology. The technical colleges usually enroll between 2,200 and 3,600 students with the exception of Farmingdale, which has nearly 12,000 students. The College of Technology at Utica/Rome, however, does not provide on-campus housing.

The eight Colleges of Technology are:

- Cobleskill Agricultural and Technical College, Cobleskill, NY
- Morrisville Agricultural and Technical College, Morrisville, NY
- Alfred College of Technology, Alfred, NY
- Canton College of Technology, Canton, NY
- Delhi College of Technology, Delhi, NY
- Farmingdale College of Technology, Farmingdale, NY
- Utica/Rome college of Technology, Utica, NY
- Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY

Twenty-nine Community Colleges

The community colleges range in size from very small (1,400) to very large (19,000). They were developed primarily to serve educational needs in specific localities across the state, offering students two-year associate degrees and one-year certificate programs in the liberal arts and in various technical and occupational areas.

The twenty-nine Community Colleges are:

- Adirondack Community College, Glens Falls, NY
- Broome Community College, Binghamton, NY
- Cayuga County Community College, Auburn, NY
- Clinton Community College, Plattsburgh, NY
- Columbia-Green Community College, Hudson, NY
- Corning Community College, Corning, NY
- Dutchess Community College, Poughkeepsie, NY
- Erie Community College, Buffalo, NY
- Finger Lakes Community College, Canandaigua, NY
- Fulton-Montgomery Community College, Johnstown, NY
- Genesee Community College, Batavia, NY
- Herkimer County Community College, Herkimer, NY
- Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, NY
- Jamestown Community College, Jamestown, NY
- Jefferson Community College, Watertown, NY
- Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, NY
- Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY
- Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY
- Niagara County Community College, Sanborn, NY
- North Country Community College, Saranac Lake, NY
- Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY
- Orange County Community College, Middletown, NY
- Rockland Community College, Suffern, NY
- Schenectady County Community College, Schenectady, NY
- Suffolk County Community College, Selden, NY
- Sullivan County Community College, Loch Sheldrake, NY
- Tompkins Cortland Community College, Dryden, NY
- Ulster County Community College, Stone Ridge, NY
- Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY

Researching colleges through resources such as catalogs, the Internet, reference books, the Choices computer program and videos is one of the most valuable steps in your college decision-making process. You will need to decide which criteria are most important for your prospective colleges to possess. Location, available programs of study, cost, selectivity, size and extra-curriculars are some variables to consider. The following are some questions to consider when thinking about what criteria are important to you in choosing a college:

1. What is the college's distance from my home?
 - a. 0 - 1 hour
 - b. 1 - 5 hours
 - c. 5 - 8 hours
 - d. over 8 hours

2. Do I plan to
 - a. commute from home?
 - b. live on campus?
 - c. live off campus?

3. At what size college would I be most comfortable?
 - a. small, 1,000-4,000 students
 - b. medium, 5,000-10,000 students
 - c. large, over 10,000 students

4. Do I plan to attend a:
 - a. business or vocational college?
 - b. public two-year college?
 - c. public four-year college?
 - d. private two-year college?
 - e. private four-year college?

5. What costs do I expect to incur per year to attend college?
 - a. under \$3,000
 - b. under \$5,000
 - c. under \$10,000
 - d. over \$10,000
 - e. over \$15,000

6. What extracurricular activities are important to me?
 - a. athletics
 - b. fraternities/sororities
 - c. clubs/organizations
 - d. fine arts

7. What type of college atmosphere do I desire?
 - a. co-ed
 - b. all male or all female
 - c. Christian or religiously affiliated
 - d. liberal
 - e. conservative

8. What academic selectivity do I desire?
 - a. highly competitive
 - b. moderately competitive
 - c. less competitive

9. What programs of study are important for my college to offer?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

10. In what environment would I feel most comfortable?

- a. rural
- b. suburban
- c. urban

There may be other criteria that are important to you when planning to attend college. In the space remaining, write down any other factors, which are essential to you in preparing for college.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

CHAPTER THREE

College Admissions

This chapter is designed to help you understand the criteria colleges consider when reviewing your application. You will want to find a match between the selectivity of the college you are considering and your high school academic record. Many components are examined by colleges, which determine your eligibility for admission.

The course of study that you choose in high school is possibly the most important criteria that colleges will consider in your application. The counseling office encourages you to take the most rigorous course of study so you will be better prepared to attend college. Both Regents and non-Regents students who have taken a challenging curriculum can attend college. Most colleges are looking for well-rounded students who have challenged themselves in their high school career.

Another component that colleges consider is your academic record. The grades you have received in your academic courses will be one factor that colleges will consider. Your cumulative grade point average (G.P.A.) is calculated by averaging the final grades in all your academic courses. Your classes are not weighted by difficulty. The only weight given is for credit; typically a full-year course is given one credit; a half-year course is weighted as a one-half credit. For each course you have passed, the final average is the grade used for calculation purposes. Once the GPA is calculated, then class rank is determined by assigning the highest cumulative average as the rank of number one in the class. Each subsequent average is assigned the next corresponding rank. The counseling office calculates averages at the completion of two, three, and three and one-half year periods.

Standardized test scores are a third component, which colleges will consider. Most colleges accept either ACT or SAT scores for admission purposes. Some colleges require the SAT II in addition to the ACT or SAT I requirement. Consult the college catalog for any colleges you are considering to determine which test or tests are required.

If you have taken the ACT or SAT, and your score was not indicative of your achievements, you may want to consider carefully whether to re-take the test. College admission policies vary regarding which test scores are accepted. Some will accept the best scores; some will only consider the most recent, and others will average the scores. For further information on standardized tests, consult Chapter Four.

A fourth component, colleges may consider in admissions is your participation in the extra-curricular activities and community services. The way you choose to spend your spare time tells the college about you. In Chapter One, you listed interests you have participated both in-school and out-of-school. You may want to go back and review this list to see if there are any new interests, that you have acquired, which may be added to this list. When you write your college essay, you may be able to draw on an experience you had when you participated in one of these activities.

A fifth component that colleges might consider is a personal essay. Your college essay is an opportunity for you to tell the college admissions officer who you are and what makes you a unique student. Refer to Chapter Seven for information on writing a college essay and/or consult with your English teacher.

The sixth component that colleges may consider in admissions is letters of recommendation. Many colleges require that you submit letters of recommendation as part of your application package. You may want to select a teacher in the area of study that you intend to pursue in college. Also, you may need to provide additional letters from your counselor or from other teachers. Make sure that whomever you select knows you well, can write about your academic strengths and is familiar with the extra-curricular activities in which you participate. Contact the individual whom you want to complete the recommendation in person and ask if he/she is willing to write a letter about you. Plan to allow the writer at least two to three weeks to finish the letter before your application deadline at the college. Have a stamped envelope addressed to the college available if the writer wishes to send the letter directly to the college. As a service, the counseling office is willing to type any faculty letters of recommendation and prefers to send them to the college with the entire application package.

The seventh component that may be required in college admission is a personal interview. Most colleges no longer require them, but interviews are still required at some very competitive colleges. If you are applying as a music or performance major, an audition may be required. In some cases, a tape or videotape may substitute for a music audition. If you are applying as an art or architecture major, the college may require you to submit a portfolio to demonstrate your skills.

College admission officers know that the best predictor of college success is high school success; consequently, it is important to do your best in high school. Taking a well-rounded and challenging curriculum not only prepares you better for the ACT or the SAT, but ensures that you will have the skills necessary to do college-level work. Extra-curricular school and community involvement help you develop personally. All of these components may be evaluated when an admissions committee is reviewing your application.

CHAPTER FOUR

College Entrance Exams

Colleges have the difficult task of trying to determine which of their many applicants would be successful in college. Since high school standards and grades vary among schools and across states, many colleges use standardized exams to compare student achievement levels. College entrance tests are taken by thousands of students across the country on the same dates and in similar testing conditions. Since students are answering the same questions and using the same time limits, their scores can be used by college admission personnel trying to compare the skill levels of their applicants. The most popular college entrance exams are the SAT and ACT. Typically these tests are taken in May and June, respectively, during the student's junior year.

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is helpful in preparing for the SAT I. The PLAN is helpful in preparing for the ACT. Some very competitive colleges also require specific subject area tests, the SAT II.

Deciding which test or tests to take is one decision you will need to make. Two criteria will help you in your consideration. First, check your prospective colleges to see what is required. Secondly, compare the format and content of both the ACT and SAT. You may want to take practice tests in each to see which test provides you a stronger score.

Test Registration

Both the SAT and the ACT have a fee and require you to submit a registration. Registration booklets for each test are available in the counseling office or you can register online. Be sure to check the deadline dates for mailing your registration. A late registration may be accepted, but there is an additional fee along with the risk of being closed out of your first choice of testing location. The tests are offered at several area high schools, although not at Sodus Central. In your registration application, you will be asked to select and prioritize two schools where you would like to take the test. Typically, students are confirmed for their first choice. If you have difficulty completing the registration form, ask one of the counseling office staff for help.

***The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)**

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is offered in mid-October at Sodus Central School.

There are two reasons a student would choose to take this test - to practice for the SAT and to qualify for National Merit Scholarships. The format of the PSAT consists of two 30-minute verbal sections, two 30-minute mathematical sections and one writing practice section. The PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) scores are reported to you, to any colleges you designate, and to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which awards 2,000 National Merit \$2,000 Scholarships to students throughout the United States. The PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin contains a sample PSAT test and further information about the PSAT test. The library has varied preparation material, which can also be purchased from any area bookstore. The current cost of the test is \$12.00.

***The Scholastic Aptitude Test I: Reasoning Tests**

The Scholastic Aptitude Test I is a three to four hour test made up of multiple choice questions for critical reading, math and writing skills and a written essay. Each section is scored on a scale of 200-800 for a total possible score of 2400. The multiple choice questions of the critical reading section test your vocabulary, verbal reasoning, and reading comprehension skills. The math questions test your ability to solve problems involving arithmetic, algebra and geometry. The writing section consists of multiple choice questions and a written essay. The multiple choice questions test your ability to identify sentence errors; improve sentences and paragraphs. The essay assesses students' ability to write on demand. The SAT I test also includes another 30-minute math or verbal section which does not count toward your scores, but is used to test questions which may be used in future SAT I tests. This is referred to as the experimental section. The cost of the test is \$41.50.

There are a number of activities that you can perform to prepare for the SAT I test. The PSAT test is a preliminary test for the SAT I. Taking it allows you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with SAT-type test questions as well as experience a formal testing situation. There is also an SAT preparation course offered in the evenings by the counseling office, which you can take to prepare for the tests. The counseling office and library has SAT I preparation books which you can use as well as the booklet Taking the SAT I, which contains a sample test. Local bookstores and computer stores have a variety of preparation manuals. If you have any questions about the SAT I, the staff in the counseling office can assist you. Make an appointment to talk to your counselor to obtain any information you may need.

***The Scholastic Aptitude Test II: Subject Tests (SAT II)**

The Scholastic Aptitude Test II: Subject Tests (SAT II) are often taken at the end of the junior year or at the mid-point of the senior year. The SAT II is administered in a variety of academic subjects and is designed to test the level of knowledge of student in particular academic disciplines in relation to other students throughout the country. The SAT II is scored on the same 200 to 800 basis as the SAT I. Some colleges use the SAT II for placement in various levels of freshman courses; some use it as an additional indicator in the admissions process.

The SAT II tests available fall under five subject areas:

- * English - Writing, Literature. (Note: The writing test may be eliminated due to changes in the SAT I, which now includes a writing section.)
- * Foreign Languages - French, French Listening, German, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Japanese Listening, Latin, Spanish Reading, Spanish Listening, Chinese Listening, Korean Listening, English Proficiency.
- * History and Social Studies - American History and Social Studies, World History.
- * Mathematics - Mathematics Level I, Mathematics Level IC, Mathematics Level IIC (Calculator).
- * Sciences - Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Biology E/M.

Each SAT II test takes one hour of testing time, and all consist entirely of multiple-choice questions except the English Writing Test with Essay, which consists of a twenty-minute essay and a forty-minute multiple-choice test.

Some colleges require certain SAT II tests for admission. You can find out if the colleges you are considering require certain tests by reviewing the college catalogs or reference books located in the counseling office. A booklet is available which gives test dates and sample questions. An additional administration fee is charged for the SAT II. Please consult the registration bulletin for current prices for specific tests.

The PLAN Test

The PLAN test is offered in either October or November, on a Saturday morning, at Sodus Central School. It is recommended that all sophomores take this test. It is a practice ACT exam which should help students when they take the ACT exam in their junior year. Like the ACT, it has tests in English, Math, Reading and Science reasoning. The PLAN test also consists of an interest inventory and study skills questionnaire. The answers to those sections provide the student with career areas that their interests and abilities are best suited for, and an analysis of their study skills. This is valuable information for career planning and improving study habits. The current cost of the PLAN test is \$9.00

The ACT Assessment

The American College Testing Assessment (ACT) consists of tests in four subject areas: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. Each of these tests contains multiple-choice questions that offer four or five choices for the best or correct answer. Each of the tests is timed. The English test contains 75 questions and has a 45-minute time limit; the Mathematics test allows 60 minutes to answer 60 questions; the Reading test takes 35 minutes and contains 40 questions; the Science Reasoning test is given in 35 minutes and has 40 questions. Each test section is scored on a scale of 1-36 and a composite score is the average of all (4) subtests. The current cost of the test is \$29.00. The booklet Preparing for the ACT Assessment has suggestions on how to prepare for the ACT and contains a practice test that you can take in preparation for the test. Pick up a copy of this booklet from the counseling office so you can familiarize yourself with this test if you decide to take it. Registration forms are available in the counseling office as are preparation books, which you can borrow to get ready for the ACT test.

The ACT Assessment Plus Writing

Beginning with the February 2005 test, students may take the ACT Assessment Plus Writing. The Writing Tests is administered at the end of the first four tests of the regular ACT Assessment. Students have 30 minutes to write a draft essay on the question that is posed. The Writing Test does not affect the composite score for the ACT Assessment. The Writing Test sub score is combined with the English Test score for a separate Writing Test Score (1/3 Writing test + 2/3 English test). The cost for the ACT Assessment Plus Writing is \$43.00. Check the ACT website (www.act.org) to see if the college you want to attend requires the Writing Test. Use the same registration form for the regular ACT Assessment to register for the ACT Assessment Plus Writing.

Some suggested readings on college admission testing include the following:

- * Carris, Joan Davenport, et al. Panic Plan for the SAT. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Carris, Joan Davenport, et al. SAT Success. Third Edition. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Owen, David. 1985. None of the Above. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- * Preparing for the ACT Assessment. American College Testing Program, Iowa City, Iowa.
- * Wall, Edward B. 1985. Admission Procedures at the Nation's Most Competitive Colleges. Alexandria, VA: Octameron Associates.

CHAPTER FIVE

College Visitation

It is highly recommended that students and parents visit college campuses during the spring and summer of the junior year and the early fall of the senior year. College visitations can give you a much clearer picture of a college than looking at a website or reading a college catalog. A campus tour can give you an idea what it would be like to attend a particular college. The purpose of this chapter is to give you some ideas about how to plan a visitation and what to look for when you are on a tour.

A visit to a campus may be the difference between four successful years of academic and social development or long-term discontent with the possible disruption of your educational goals for a transfer to another college. A visit to the college or university that you are interested in can be the key in determining if that campus will meet your social, educational and personal expectations.

Listed below are several suggestions, which will help make your college visits productive:

1. Make an appointment by calling the admissions office of the college that you plan to visit. The counseling office can assist you by providing appropriate telephone numbers. Call at least 2-3 weeks in advance to arrange for a tour and an interview.
2. If you want to spend the night on campus, make this request through the admissions office. Give them as much lead-time as possible.
3. Special requests, such as interviews with coaches or professors in specific disciplines, should be made in advance.
4. Make arrangements to sit in on a class or two; this is a good way to get a feel for the college and a certain department.
5. If possible, stay on campus rather than in a motel so you can meet students in natural situations.
6. If you are driving and plan to park on campus, request a parking permit.
7. Pay attention to posters, notices, and graffiti on campus since these can give you an idea of what life is like at this college. Take home a copy of the campus newspaper since many of the social, political, and intellectual issues on campus are covered in this publication

8. Study the college catalogs in advance of your visit and be prepared to ask questions.
9. Be sure to take a copy of your transcript and test scores with you. These can be obtained in the counseling office.
10. Take a campus tour and look at dormitories, dining halls, classrooms, library, student center, counseling and health centers.
11. Be prepared to answer questions such as:
 - *Why do you want to go to college?
 - *Why are you interested in this college?
 - *Why are you interested in your selected major?
 - *What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - *What extra-curricular activities interest you?
12. Talk with students and faculty:
 - *How strong is the department in which you plan to major?
 - *What kinds of support services are provided – counseling, tutoring, and job placement?
 - *How challenging is the academic program?
 - *What is the social life?
 - *What is my chance of acceptance?
13. Remember that you are also making an impression. Arrive promptly as scheduled, dress neatly, be prepared to ask and answer questions, and relax. Note the name of the admissions representative and write a thank you note to him/her after your visit.
14. Consider some of the following questions that you might want to ask during a campus visit:
 - *Where do I get an application?
 - *When should I apply?
 - *When will I get a response to my application?
 - *What test scores are required?
 - *Do you require letters of recommendation?
 - *What is the cost of tuition, room and board, and books?
 - *Would you describe the financial aid package at your campus?
 - *Do you have the specific academic program in which I wish to major, and are there any special entrance requirements to that program?
 - *Are students required to live in dorms?
 - * Is the campus predominantly residential or commuter?

- *When does the academic calendar begin and end?
- *What is the amount of the application fee?
- *What are the most popular programs?
- *Is it possible to study abroad?
- *Does the school provide work-study opportunities?
- *What is the student-teacher ratio?
- *Who teaches introductory courses?
- *Are there fraternities and sororities?
- *May a student have a car?
- *What type of religious life is provided?
- *What percentage of the student body is receiving financial aid?
- *What core courses are required in the freshman year?
- *What are the average SAT or ACT scores for the incoming freshman class?
- *What percentage of graduates enter graduate school?
- *What are the college's athletic facilities?
- *What are the most competitive programs?

Keep notes throughout your campus visit? When it is over with, do a summary of your visit. Weigh the pros and cons. See the summary worksheet on page 42.

Interviewing

Try to arrange for an interview with an admissions officer when you visit a campus. Personal interviews are one of the best ways for you to find out about a college. Some colleges no longer give interviews or do not encourage them. However, there are many others that do require some kind of interview or at least strongly recommend one. Be sure to find out how each college you are considering views interviews in the admission process.

Listed below are some suggestions for a successful interview:

- *If you visit only one campus, visit your first choice. If you can visit more than one campus, choose a college other than your top choice for your first visit and interview so that you can build your confidence and develop an interview technique.
- *Think of interviews as important fact-finding missions.
- *Bring along a copy of your transcript and test scores.
- *Assert yourself during the interview. Be enthusiastic about your accomplishments and the preparation you received at your high school.

*Be prompt.

*Be neat. Appropriate dress is still an easy way to impress an interviewer.

*Answer questions to the best of your knowledge and ability. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something.

*Be yourself. Do not pretend to be something or someone you are not.

*Relax. Interviews are meant to be informative. Be confident in yourself and think positively.

*Be prepared. Have an interview strategy in mind that is consistent with your college essay if you wrote one for a particular college that you are visiting.

Some suggested reading on visitations and interviewing include:

Ripple, G. Gary. 1986. Campus Pursuit: How to Make the Most of the College Visit and Interview. Alexandria, VA: Octameron Associates.

Utterback, Ann S. College Admissions Face to Face. Seven Locks Press, 1989.

PROCEDURE FOR LEGAL COLLEGE VISIT ORGANIZED BY PARENT OR STUDENT

The student must:

1. Make an appointment with the admissions office of the college.
This appointment should be made far enough in advance to allow for #3.
2. Have his/her parent or guardian write a note excusing the student from school stating the date, time and college the student will visit. This note is to be taken to the Senior High Discipline Office at least one day in advance of the planned visit.
3. Get a College Visit Form from the Discipline Office when the note from the parent is left at the office.
4. Have the College Visit Form signed and stamped (with the college or admission office seal) at the time of the visit to the college.

5. Return the signed and stamped College Visit Form to the Senior High Discipline Office within three (3) days of the visit. (The visit will not be marked legal until this form is returned).

COLLEGE VISIT FORM

This form is to verify that _____ visited our Admissions
Name

Office at _____ on _____ from
College or University Date Time

_____ to _____.
Date Time

Signature of College Admissions Person

Admissions Office or College Stamp

CHAPTER SIX

Decision Making and Selection Process

As you begin to decide which colleges you would like to attend, keep the factors you identified in the earlier chapters in mind. You will want to refer back to the self-assessment information and update anything that is no longer accurate about you. As you continue this process, it will help you to make choices about which college offers the program and has the facilities that fit your needs best. Do not forget to enlist the help of your parents, counselor, friends, teachers, employer, coach or anyone in the community who can aid you in learning more about yourself. There are other resources available to you to help you examine yourself and discover what you want to get out of a college education. One way to do this is to use the Choices computer program in the computer lab. Your counselor can help you use the right program to meet your individual needs. Career decision-making, college majors and careers, occupational information and two and four year colleges can be examined on the Choices computer program.

Another way you can decide what you want out of college is to discuss your plans and goals with your parents. This may seem like an obvious resource to you, but your parents can help you with a variety of activities in deciding which college to attend. The support your parents provide can be invaluable to you in making your decision. Your parents can assist you by going to college visitations with you, proofreading your applications and college essays, and providing information and resources that you may not have considered before. The key to doing this is to keep the lines of communication open between yourself and your parents. If you allow your parents to help you in planning for college, you will not be alone in making your decisions.

A third resource in college decision-making is the books and materials found in the collage library in the counseling office. There are a number of books you can use such as Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges, Chronicle Two-Year and Four-Year Databooks, Chronicle Vocational School Manual and The College Handbook. These books can help you compare colleges you are considering. Once you have investigated the colleges, you can begin to develop a preferential ranking based on the colleges which possess the qualities that are most important to you and which best meet your individual needs.

The counseling office recommends you apply to at least 2 to 3 colleges. We suggest you consider applying to a college that may be a “stretch” for you to be admitted and at least one college that fits your needs and in which you most probably will gain acceptance. There is no minimum number of colleges to which you need apply. Some students will only apply to one college, while others may apply to many. Often students who apply to both public and private colleges make their choice after reviewing financial aid packages. The following worksheet can help you begin to pull together information, which you have identified, in previous chapters.

SUMMARY SHEET

1. Potential College Major _____
(refer to page 10)

2. List the most important college criteria, which you identified in the questions from Chapter Two (page 29).

3. List the potential colleges you have identified.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. Based on the research you have done on the above-listed colleges, list your top choice for prospective colleges. You may want to visit these if you have not already done so.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Use resources available to compare your prospective colleges. The following worksheet can help you examine these colleges by comparing concise information.

College Comparison Worksheet

College Name	College A	College B	College C
Location *Distance from home			
Size *Enrollment *Size of campus			
Environment *Type of school (2 yr., 4 yr.) *Setting (urban, suburban, rural) *Co-ed, male, female *Religious affiliation			
Admission Requirements *Application Deadline *Tests required *Average test scores, GPA, Rank *Special Requirements *Notification of Acceptance			
Academics *Majors offered *Accreditation *Faculty-to-Student Ratio *Average Class Size			
College Expenses *Tuition *Room and Board *fees *Total estimated expenses *Application fee, required deposit			

College Name	College A	College B	College C
Financial Aid *Deadline *Required Forms *% Receiving Aid *Scholarships/Grants *Loan *Work Study			
Housing *Availability *Types and Size *Rules & Regulations *Food Plan			
Facilities *Academic *Recreational *Fine Arts *Other			
Activities *Organizations/Clubs *Fraternities, Sororities *Athletics, Intramurals *Other			
Campus Visits *Availability *Special Opportunities			

CHAPTER SEVEN

College Application Procedures

The first step in the application process is to examine the list of colleges you generated on the worksheet on page 37 of this handbook. You will want to consider all the important factors you have identified in previous chapters in this handbook when deciding to which colleges you will apply. The counseling office strongly suggests that you apply to at least one college that will most probably accept you.

The next step in the application process is to obtain the applications for the colleges to which you are applying. It often takes colleges weeks to get applications mailed. Request applications during the summer between your junior and senior years or go to college website to see if the application is available online. The counseling office has SUNY applications as well as applications for many local area colleges. If you need an application for a college, the counseling office can call or help you send for the information that you need. When your application arrives, you may want to photocopy it for use as a rough draft.

In completing an application, there may be a number of tasks necessary for the entire application package. These tasks include writing a college essay, getting letters of recommendation from teachers or your counselor and arranging to have your official transcript or test scores sent to the college(s). You should arrange to have your college application(s) sent out from the counseling office.

Test scores from the PLAN, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and SAT II test are recorded on each transcript sent out to colleges by the counseling office. Some colleges, however, require that tests scores be sent directly from the testing companies. If scores must be sent directly, you may obtain a form in the counseling office.

Another requirement that colleges may request in admissions is to submit letters of recommendation as part of your application package. You may want to select a teacher in the area of study that you intend to pursue in college. Also, you may need to provide additional letters from your counselor or from other teachers. Make sure that whomever you select knows you well, can write about your academic strengths and is familiar with the extra-curricular activities in which you participate. Contact the individual whom you want to complete the recommendation in person and ask if he/she is willing to write a letter about you. Plan to allow the writer at least 2-3 weeks to complete the letter. Have a stamped envelope addressed to the college available if the writer wishes to send the letter directly to the college. As a service, the counseling office is willing to type any letter of recommendation and send the letter out for a writer. If all letters of recommendation are sent with your application packet, they are less likely to be lost.

After completing your application, remember to proofread it. You must be thorough, accurate and timely in the application process if you want colleges to look favorably upon your application. Remember that the application represents you. Once you have completed it, submit all parts, with the application fee in the form of a check or money order, to the counseling office.

The counseling office will assemble and mail out your application package for you. Your application package may include some or all of the following: the application form, the application fee, transcripts and standardized test scores, the college essay, and the letters of recommendation. Make sure that you have allowed at least one week before the application is due to send all these materials out from the counseling office. This will ensure that your application is received before the final deadline.

If you file an application online, make sure you request that your transcripts be sent from the counseling office. Often colleges have a form to print out from the online application to request your transcript from the counseling office.

College Application Essays

Most high school seniors say that the essays are the most difficult part of the application process. Writing something that is thoughtful, entertaining, and informative to an unknown reader is a difficult assignment. Knowing that what you write will be important in determining your admission to colleges makes this task even more difficult.

Your essays provide the best personal picture of you that the admissions committee will get. College admissions officers gain insight into your character from your essays. Your essays should provide information about you that is not provided in other parts of the application. If your essays are clear, well-constructed, and thoughtful, they will surely help your case. It is important to take the time to do the best job possible in your essay writing.

In evaluating your written responses, colleges look for evidence of your:

- *writing ability
- *motivation
- *creativity
- *self-discipline
- *character
- *capacity for growth

Follow the steps below to ensure that your essays are the best possible example of your writing ability.

Plan and Think - decide exactly how you want to approach essay questions. Instead of procrastinating, think about the topic and plan how you want to answer it. This planning and thinking time will be time well spent.

Make an Outline - This does not have to be a formal outline, but by organizing your thoughts, you will be able to look at possible responses or approaches to the question. Once you have decided what the topic of your essay will be, list the major points you want to make.

Get a Second Opinion - Before you actually start to write your essay, talk with parents, friends or your counselor about your essay topic. Other people who know you well may be able to give you some additional insight and direction.

Write a Rough Draft - This should be an expansion of your outline. Be sure that you answer the question that is being asked. Have a forceful opening, a middle section and a conclusion, which addresses the topic you have chosen.

Check with Your English Teacher - After you have written your rough draft, ask your English teacher to critique your rough draft and help you clean up any rough edges.

Write the Final Draft - By using your outline, rough draft, and teacher's suggestions, this step should proceed smoothly. Make sure that you do not stray from the topic.

Proofread - After your proofread your essay thoroughly, have someone else proofread it also.

Make a Copy - Once you complete your application and essays, make a copy and keep in a safe place, in case your application gets lost in the mail.

Remember, your college essay is an opportunity for you to tell the college who you are and what makes you a unique student. The following is a list of Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind when writing your college essay:

DO's

1. Plan ahead. Leave yourself plenty of time to write your essay so that you can review and revise your essay before submitting it to the college to which you are applying.
2. Be honest and natural in your essay by being yourself. If you write about yourself genuinely and tell of your unique experiences, you will tell the college more about you as a person than just your grades and test scores.
3. Read the directions carefully and focus on answering the question, which you have selected. Make sure that your essay is focused, organized and is written in a logical and cohesive manner.

4. Write about a topic you know something about, in your own voice. When you write your essay, make sure that it is written as only you could have done.
5. If asked, explain specifically and knowledgeably why you are interested in attending this college and what the college can do for you.
6. Outline your essay using an introduction, supporting details, and a summary to support your thesis.
7. Have someone else proofread your essay before typing your final draft. The person you select should be able to detect any grammatical, word usage, or mechanical errors in your essay. Make a copy of your final draft in case it is lost or misfiled by the college.
8. If appropriate, try to be creative and use humor in your essay to tell about yourself. Use care in writing to make sure that the humor fits with the theme or thesis of your essay.

DON'TS

1. Don't make the essay sound contrived or like someone else wrote it for you.
2. Don't rehash information that can be found in your high school transcript or in the other application materials.
3. Don't be modest and forget to include your greatest assets or accomplishments. Avoid presenting generalities about yourself; instead be specific about yourself and your accomplishments.
4. Don't be afraid to express your anxieties or indecisiveness about entering college. Admission officers are people who enjoy helping others and can be influenced by your candidness about yourself.
5. Don't begin the essay with a quote from the dictionary or rely on the thesaurus when writing the essay.
6. Don't use quotation marks about words, which aren't quotes or overuse exclamation points in your essay. Use other words or rewrite the sentence to eliminate the quotation marks: Exclamation marks should be used sparingly.
7. Don't include controversial issues about which you have strong opinions. Your essay could be misinterpreted as demonstrating an intolerant attitude.

The following are typical essay questions, listed from actual college applications.

1. If you could spend an evening with any person living or dead, whom would you choose, and how would you spend your evening? Explain why you chose this person.
2. Your teachers are all sitting in the faculty lounge and your name comes up in the conversation. Describe what each of your teachers is mentioning about you in this conversation.
3. Some countries have a tradition of honoring people who have made a contribution to culture or society. Choose a contemporary for such an honor and explain why you would choose this person.
4. What is the most difficult experience you have ever had, and how did you cope with it?
5. If you could assume any role in history, what would it be; tell us why?
6. Please provide information that you feel will give a more complete and accurate picture of yourself, e.g. unusual background, personal philosophy or traits, goals, etc.
7. Describe a teacher who has had a significant effect on your development and explain why.
8. Explain your educational and career goals. Include why you are choosing this college as part of your overall plan.

If required, a well-written essay can be the key to being admitted to a college you would like to attend. The counseling office can provide you with assistance in writing your essay. Contact your counselor to set up an appointment.

For further assistance in writing a college application essay, several sample essays follow. These essays were written by students and are included as examples only. Remember that colleges want to get to know you, your personality and style.

A Personal Concern

A topic that has engendered much personal concern for me during the past year involves my exploration and decision-making regarding a college I might wish to attend. The entire process has been an immediate and important issue in my life during which I have become better informed about colleges, decision-making, and myself. As advice has bombarded me from those who have entertained my questions about selecting a college, my final decision must heavily consider my priorities and desire as well. Hopefully my choice will be prudent and my hard work will be rewarded.

Since my junior year in high school, the entire process of selecting colleges for which to seek admission has caused me to do some personal self-exploration. I have been raised in a family that values education eminently. Therefore, I have worked hard to develop solid skills with the intention of attending a college offering an academically stimulating environment, which will optimize my potential. Secondly, having lived in a relatively small and homogeneous environment for the past eighteen years. I now have the desire to experience more diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds to which I am not accustomed. I believe this diversity of beliefs and opinions will intrigue rather than threaten me. Because I realize that many ideas exist in the global communities that are not found in Macedon, New York, I look forward to the vast differences in culture and beliefs. As a result of my personal and college search, two important personal values have emerged, thus I am seeking an academically challenging college that celebrates the differences among the various cultures represented.

Through my experience, the most effective method of acquiring the taste and atmosphere of a campus is through personal experience. Thus this past summer and fall, I traveled all over the state looking at potential colleges. When I looked at Ithaca College, the campus environment and available facilities initially struck me as impressive. As I spoke with admission personnel and students alike, I soon came to appreciate everyone's high level of respect for excellence in education. The high standards for admission, the teaching dedication of highly talented professors, and the success of research laboratories all indicated the academic superiority of the college. Furthermore, the total campus had a sense of cultural and experiential diversity, which leads me to believe possibilities for my awareness and growth are immense.

An issue that has great importance to me concerns the search for a college that will allow me to fill my potential in an inspiring and motivating environment. At the conclusion of this search, I have found the experience to be challenging yet extremely enlightening. As a result I have learned much about myself regarding personal values and goals. Now, engaged in my senior year, I have a sense of satisfaction with applying to Ithaca College. This issue has been a serious matter to me as well as my family, but now I think we all feel confident upon completing the search.

My Part-time Job

Hard work built American. To achieve her dream, this American has pulled herself up by her bootstraps. Now in these days and times, the American Dream means a job, a house, a car, and a loving family. However, the importance of working hard still prevails.

This past August I finally won the part-time job I had sought all summer. I have never held a real job before. True, since freshman year, I've cleaned the library on weekends, but I had control of my hours and little supervision. This flexibility made my jobs barely seem like jobs at all. I had a little bit of spending money and it was great.

However, my new job as cashier at the local supermarket has been a real jolt. You might figure it's easy to be a cashier - just run everything over the scanner. I soon found this premise dead wrong. After training, I was unsure and afraid. I thought I would never get the hang of it. I would never be as good as the other cashiers, never memorize the produce codes everyone else knew. Now, with six months on the job, I'm proud to say I've overcome every "never".

I've learned that a job means more than easy money; work is a commitment, which cuts into time for school work, activities and friends. The first time I missed an outing with my friends, a basketball game, or had to stay up too late doing my homework, the job became my enemy. I know, though, that if I tough it out until second semester at school, I will have made it through the hard part. I will not quit; my parents have taught me never to be a quitter.

These months on the cashier line I've learned the value of hard work. Now I understand why my parents are tired and complain sometimes. Having a job can be difficult, but I know my parents can't afford college without some help from me. All in all my job has made me take more responsibility and live up to that responsibility.

Personal Honor

Ernest Hemingway's novel A Farewell to Arms is an extraordinary book, which not only inspired me, but caused me to take some personal inventories. The actions of Catherine Barkley and Frederick Henry have caused me to become more aware of how I would like to live my life.

Catherine Barkley is a character who faces challenges with honor, courage, and discipline. Even though other characters find her behavior immoral, she finds contentment doing what she believes in. Frederick also possesses the ability to overcome trying situations. At the end of the novel when Catherine dies, Frederick realizes that a person is alone in the world no matter how many people surround him. This concept does not appear to scare him as he is satisfied with himself and finds inner peace.

Upon reading this book, I was challenged to re-evaluate my personal code of honor. Many times people are lured into behaviors, which have the underlying theme that they are honorable as long as they are perceived as such, while the underlying motives such as deceit and selfishness remain hidden. It is often easier to project the facade or morality rather than live the reality of a true character. Appearances tend to contribute substantially to one's success in our modern world. For this reason, the temptation of a facade is too great for many people. The concept of truly living honorably is lost amid the drive to succeed in a competitive world and the desire to appear better than the competition.

I realized, upon introspection, how often I too am guilty of this behavior. Living honorably is achieved with a day-to-day life style, often involving such small events as being honest with a friend. For me it includes simply resisting pressure from companions and classmates to do something I believe is immoral. In today's world, it is very easy to take advantage of a situation for the betterment of oneself. I have come to the realization that I would like to edit and reorganize my values. I believe I have the responsibility to myself to form principles, which will give me a sense of well-being. The rewards of such decisions are purely intrinsic and will bring about a sense of inner peace.

Literature, like art, can be appreciated for its beauty and magnificence. However, when it also takes on the capacity to influence a person's life, that beauty is enhanced and the material becomes a personal treasure.

A Christmas Memory

As a child, I remember Christmas magically appearing on the fourth Friday of every November and vanishing by afternoon of January first. Each year it came to spread peace, joy and prosperity and left the world a better place. But last year, I discovered Christmas was no longer the tidy little present I envisioned as a child.

Preparing and delivering Christmas baskets to needy families has been a long-standing tradition at my church. As a child, I was involved merely with the basket preparation. This was not done out of the kindness and benevolence of my seven year-old heart. The two driving forces behind my volunteering were the fact that I got out of my Sunday school class and that I was guaranteed cookies with icing afterward. Given menial tasks such as making sure each basket had a bottle of shampoo or a can of cranberry sauce, I was usually finished within half an hour, leaving me time to eat my fill of treats and play tag in the church basement. In my young mind, I thought I understood the meaning of charity and felt fulfilled in the ease of being a good Christian. For a first grader it was all just part of my magical Christmas package.

Last year at the age of sixteen, I was given a new perspective of Christmas. I once again helped with the baskets, realizing more of their purpose and significance. Having a license granted me the promotion to deliverer. On route to the first house, with several of my friends, I thought little of what emotions I might encounter other than a gratifying sense of kindness and generosity. I instead popped in my Carpenters Christmas tape, turned up the volume, and shared my plans for the vacation with my passengers. This vision of joyous giving and contributing, however, was not to be the case. I saw parents trying to regain pride as they accepted donations from teenagers. I faced children who, in receiving a small gift, were more ecstatic than I was after opening all my Christmas morning packages. But what truly, truly hit me that afternoon was my naive conception of charity and narrow understanding of humility. When we got back to the church basement, the cookies were gone and as I drove myself home, I began to cry.

Christmas 1991 opened new horizons for me, but also took from me another portion of my fragile innocence. It posed to me questions that I still am unable to answer. Were my trivial attempts to ease another's burden in vain? Did the recipients think of us as Santa's elves or spoiled kids? And how do the children deal daily with what I only glimpsed at? This specific step toward my adulthood has left me both more aware and more unsettled. Christmas is no longer the neatly wrapped package topped with a bow that it once was.

My Typical Day

On a typical Monday morning, I crawl out of bed at about 7:15 a.m., which leaves me exactly enough time to perform my morning routine and walk to school without arriving late for homeroom. Figuring out the latest I can get up and leave to school took months of research but that extra minute relaxing in bed makes all the difference!

Upon arrival at school, I might put up the flag or make the morning announcements. However, I usually go to the Yearbook Homeroom. As editor, I might have to organize the group to sell yearbooks or discuss an upcoming deadline. Between classes, my favorite phrase is "Who understand this calculus???" The calculus students drive everyone else nuts ranting about derivatives and related rates. In my favorite class, politics, I argue with the teacher who loves to churn the entire class into an uproar, and then wonder why he has high blood pressure. He'll challenge every student's argument and later on manage to appropriate the student's position for his own purposes. He drives all of us up the wall, but he makes us learn.

After lunch, AP calculus and AP biology really make me work and think. However, I enjoy the challenge. Teachers often say that student's catch "Senioritis", but none of that is tolerated in Mrs. Robbins math class. We do our work and do it on time or face the consequences. After school, I might have ski team practice until 7 p.m. or I might have to work on a yearbook deadline, or I might have to go to my part-time job at a local supermarket, or if I am really, really lucky, I might get to go home and relax and watch trashy TV talk shows.

Most nights, my whole family - mom, dad, brother and sister - sit down to dinner together and talk about our day at school and work. We're a spirited group, each ready for combat over an issue of interest (or for second helpings). After dinner, I prepare for the next day. I never go to sleep until I'm ready for a new day in the morning - and those blissful minutes dozing after the alarm.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the College Admissions Process

It is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities in the college admissions process. To assist you, the counseling office suggests that you understand the following:

Students' Rights Include:

1. Receiving full information from colleges and universities about their admissions, financial aid, and scholarship policies.
2. Not responding to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until you have heard from all colleges and universities to which you have applied, or by May 1, whichever comes first. (It may be necessary to request an extension in writing).

Students' Responsibilities include:

1. Making sure you understands the admissions, financial aid, and scholarship policies of the colleges and universities where you plan to apply. This includes being aware of deadlines, restrictions, etc.
2. Completing and submitting all material that is required for application and meeting all deadlines.
3. Following the application procedures of our high school.
4. Notifying each college or university that admits you of your acceptance or rejection of his or her offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have heard from all the colleges where you applied, or by May 1, whichever is earlier.
5. Confirming your intention to enroll and submitting a deposit to only one college or university by its required notification date, usually May 1.

Some suggested readings on the admission process include:

- * Bauld, Harry. On Writing the College Application Essay, Barnes & Noble, 1987.
- * Gelband, Scott et al. Your College Application. College Entrance Examination Board, 1991.
- * Georges, Christopher and Gigi Georges. 100 Successful College Application Essays. Mentor, 1988.
- * Get Organized! Fiske's Unbeatable System for Applying to College. Edward B. Fiske and Phyllis Steinbrecher. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Green, Howard and Robert Minton. Scaling the Ivy Wall. Little, Brown, 1987.
- * Handbook for College Admissions: A Family Guide. Third edition. Thomas C. Hayden. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Newman, Gerald. Writing Your College Admission Essay. Franklin, Watts, 1987.
- * Peterson's College Selection Service 1992 for both 2-year and 4-year colleges. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Peterson's Guide to College Admissions. Fifth edition. R. Fred Zuker. Peterson's Guides. Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Ripple, Gary. Admit On!: Your Guide to College Application. Longman Trade, 1987.
- * Shields, Charles. The College Guide for Parents. College Entrance Examination Board, 1988.
- * The Statement of Principles of Good Practice and Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the College Admission Process, the National Association of College Admission Counselors. 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 430, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.
- * Unger, Harlow. A Student's Guide to College Admissions. Facts on File, 1986.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Financial Aid

Many students and their families face the challenge of financing a college education today when costs are at an all-time high. Even though the family is still primarily responsible for meeting college costs, financial assistance is available. Sources of aid are available from federal and state governments, private programs, and colleges. While these programs do not guarantee that college costs will be covered in full, you should pursue all avenues of financial aid on a timely basis. When your family applies for federal financial aid, a congressionally approved, nation-wide formula is used to determine how much you and your family are expected to contribute to your education. Information you provide, including income and assets, is used to calculate that amount. The total cost of your education minus the amount of your expected family contribution is called your financial need. Federal and state governments, as well as your college, will attempt to assist you in financing your unmet need. This chapter will provide you with information that will help you understand what options are available and how to pursue financial assistance to attend college.

Financial Need

When you apply for financial aid from the federal or state government, a standardized formula is used to compute the amount of money deemed reasonable for your family to contribute annually toward your education. The cost of your education minus your expected family contribution is considered your financial need. The following formula illustrates how financial need is calculated:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Cost of Education} \\ - \text{Expected Family Contribution} \\ = \text{Financial Need} \end{array}$$

Estimating your expenses

Costs vary greatly, and each institution establishes its own cost figures to compute your need. Remember that books and fees for some programs are more expensive than others. Also, costs are affected by whether you live at home or on campus. Include these expenses into your budget:

Direct Educational Costs:

- *Tuition
- *Fees
- *Books
- *Supplies

Living Costs:

- *Room
- *Board
- *Transportation
- *Personal expenses

Financial Aid

Financial aid is assistance in meeting the cost of your college, vocational, or trade school education. This aid can be applied to direct costs such as tuition, fees, and books, and for living expenses such as food, housing and transportation.

The following are three types of financial aid:

- * Grants or scholarships: Grants and scholarships are funds that are not paid back. Grants are usually based on need; scholarships can be based on need or merit criteria such as academic achievement.

- * Loans. Loans are monies that must be repaid after graduation or leaving school. Student loans have lower interest rates than commercial loans.

- * Work and Work-Study. A student earns funds in payment for a job, which the student acquired on his/her own through a private employer or through the college's work-study program.

How Financial Aid Works

Financial aid is awarded by the federal government, states, colleges and private agencies. You should file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for federal aid. You will then receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR displays your estimated family contribution and whether you are eligible for federal aid. The federal government makes the information from the Free Federal Application available to institutions. CSS/Financial Aid Profile is required by some institutions, states and private agencies to award their own funds. The College Scholarship Service reports information from the profile, as well as your estimated federal eligibility, to the colleges listed on the profile. Once colleges receive the SAR, they know what your family contribution is expected to be, and what state and federal grants or loans you are eligible for. They can then put together a financial aid package to offer you. A financial aid officer will attempt to give you a package of loans, scholarships, or grants and work-study which totals the amount of your financial need. If the amount formulated as your expected family contribution is unreasonable, it is important to meet with the financial aid office at your college and explain your family's circumstances. The financial aid office does have the authority to lower the amount of your estimated family contribution.

Financial aid is intended to supplement, not replace, family resources. Families should think of themselves as the primary source of college funds. Most colleges, government agencies, and programs also expect students to contribute as much as possible.

The following are some factors used in evaluating an expected family contribution:

- * Parents' annual income
- * Family assets (savings, investments, etc.)
- * Student's income and assets
- * Family size
- * Number of family members attending college

A higher contribution is usually expected from a family with a more substantial income. Similarly, a family with large assets is generally expected to contribute more than a family with the same income but no assets.

Even when families have no substantial college savings, they may be expected to contribute, based on their ability and willingness to work as demonstrated by their previous year's earnings. Many institutions require a minimum student contribution of approximately \$900 from either earnings or savings.

Each family situation is unique. Individual circumstances are taken into account when your application is considered, even though standard formulas are used to analyze your family's financial situation. It is your responsibility to let the college know of any circumstances, which inhibit your family's ability to contribute the expected amount.

Types of Financial Aid

Money for your aid package comes primarily from the federal government, state government, and from private programs.

Federal Programs. The federal government supplies the most financial aid. This includes grants, loans, and work-study programs. This aid is based on need. The Federal Student Guide, published by the U.S. Department of Education, has more information on Federal aid programs including:

- *Federal Pell Grants
- *Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
- *Federal Perkins Loans
- *Federal Stafford Loans
- *Federal Parents' Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)
- *Federal Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS)
- *Federal Direct Student Loan Program
- *Federal Work-Study

State Programs. State aid may be based on need, merit, or both. Most states offer the following:

- *Scholarships and grants for residents
- *Loans
- *Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

College Programs. Many colleges have a variety of aid programs funded from their own resources. Deadlines and criteria vary greatly. Ask the financial aid office well in advance about the following:

- *Scholarships and grants
- *Work aid
- *Loans

Private Programs. Many private organizations provide aid to students. Your parents' employers, labor unions, or professional associations may sponsor programs. Also check community and service organizations, local churches, fraternities, sororities, veterans' posts, and businesses.

Your religious, ethnic, or racial heritage may qualify you for aid programs, so may participation or membership in local activities or organizations. Special talents or skills can also create opportunities. A variety of resources are available to assist you in locating scholarships. The counseling office has scholarship books, and a file of college and private scholarship announcements and the Choices computer program. The Internet is also a great source for financial aid information. Any of these can be used to locate potential scholarship sources.

Local Awards and Scholarships Offered at Sodus

Desmond Wilkes Scholarship

The Desmond-Wilkes Scholarship is offered to all Sodus students pursuing any training or further education beyond high school for tuition costs only. The amount varies from year to year based on the money available and the number of students applying for the scholarship. Applications are available in the Guidance Office or Main Office and are due in the Main Office by March 1, 2005.

In addition to the Desmond-Wilkes Scholarship, the community of Sodus provides graduates with much financial support and academic recognition. Families, service organizations and businesses award annually several awards and scholarships. About half of the scholarships require students to submit an application. In May, the counseling office will provide students with a complete description of all local scholarships. The students then have approximately two weeks to complete applications for the scholarships for which they are eligible. Recipients are announced at an award night. The following is a list of local awards and scholarships offered at Sodus High School:

Sodus Council of Churches Recognition Award
Sodus Central School Scholarships
C. Irving Sprong Memorial Scholarships
Sodus Faculty Association Scholarships
J.D. Costello & James F. Costello Memorial Scholarship
Salvation Army Scholarship
Student Council Scholarships
Lions Club Scholarships
James Tack Memorial Scholarship
The Sodus Rotary Club Dr. Thomas C. Hobbie Memorial
Scholarship
Pete Petersen Memorial Scholarship
Sodus Lodge #392 F. & A.M. Scholarship
F.S. Hungerford Memorial Athletic Scholarship
Sodus Grange #73 Scholarship
Matthew Hendrikse Memorial Scholarship
James F. Sweet Memorial Scholarship
Sodus Town Chamber of Commerce Scholarship
Parent-Teacher-Student Association Scholarship
Lois Fisher Memorial Scholarship
Tracey DeFisher Licata Memorial Scholarship
Dana L. Dutton Memorial Scholarship

Wayne Area Vocational Center

Scholarships are also awarded to students who attend the Wayne Technical Career Center.

Financial Aid Packages

A financial aid package is determined by the financial aid administrator at the college to which you have applied. It is based on the information you and your family provided on either the FAFSA and/or CSS/Financial Aid Profile form you completed in January.

Aid administrators may adjust the figures on your FAFSA and Profile, depending on any new information you provide or on special college policies. Institutions use the federal need-analysis formulas to determine your family's eligibility for federal aid. However, in many cases, states and institutions will use different guidelines for distributing their own funds. Once your family's contribution is determined, your aid eligibility is calculated by subtracting the amount the college expects to pay from the cost of attendance.

If you have financial need, the next step for the financial aid administrator is to determine the size and composition of your financial aid package. Colleges and the government decide how much and what kind of aid you may receive. Assistance may be from one or more sources, but all financial aid packages contain only three basic types of aid - grants or scholarships, loans and work-study.

Sample student packages

To give you an idea how costs and financial aid packages differ, the following chart gives examples of different costs and aid packages for three different colleges. The last column can be used as an outline for any student aid packages which colleges may offer you.

Total Average Costs and Aid Packages

	2 year public school (commuter)	4 year public school (resident)	4 year private school (resident)	you
A. Total Costs of Attendance (Budget)	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$15,000	
B. Family Contribution (Student & Parents)	2,800	2,800	2,800	
C. Need (A minus B)	700	4,200	12,200	

Typical Aid Package

*Federal Pell Grant	--	--	--
*State Scholarship	--	--	--
*Institutional Grant	--	1,000	6,000
*Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunities Grant	--	--	--
*Federal Work-Study	400	1,000	1,600
*Federal Perkins Loan	300	300	300
*Institutional Loan	--	900	3,300
*Federal Stafford Loan	--	--	--
*PLUS Loan	--	1,000	1,000
Total Financial Aid	700	4,200	12,000

In the examples, the colleges are able to provide enough financial aid to meet the students' total needs. There is, however, substantial difference in the amount of loans one would need to assume in each different case. It is not always the case that every college does offer you the full amount of aid you need. The financial aid administrator at the college you choose will want to help you afford to attend that college. But options may be limited because of institutional policies or a shortage of funds. Give yourself the best chance of obtaining funds by applying early.

Making your decision

Once the aid administrator analyzes your information, you will receive an award letter, which usually explains:

- *How your eligibility for federal aid was determined
- *How your need for non-federal aid was determined
- *Type of financial aid offered
- *Amount of financial aid offered

Review this letter carefully. If you do not understand the information, or if you have questions about your package, contact the financial aid office at the college to make an appointment to discuss your questions or concerns.

You may also receive award notices from the state agency or private programs to which you have applied. If you are requested to provide additional information, do so promptly. After you receive your award letters do the following:

Evaluate all offers of financial aid carefully. Colleges may offer different amounts of aid, and different combinations of gifts and self-help. Wait to hear from all the colleges to which you have applied before you accept an offer.

Decide which college best meets your needs and goals. You have to apply for financial aid every year, and you are not guaranteed the same amount. Your family's financial circumstances may change; program eligibility requirements may change; or the college may run short of funds. Ask the college if any scholarship or grant money offered is likely to be offered every year you attend that college. Ask if your award money is dependent on any stipulations such as academic performance or your declared major.

Notify the colleges whose aid offers you are accepting. Let the other institutions know, too, so they can offer the money to other students who need it.

Ask about alternative college financing sources. Your college may offer a tuition budgeting program to spread out payments. Loans may also be available for students who do not qualify for federal aid.

Check with banks and other financial institutions. They may offer programs for families who wish to borrow for college expenses.

Check your personal resources. Look for ways to cut expenses or save more. Can you work part-time or convert some assets into cash?

Look at your costs. Maybe you can lessen expenses. Living at home and commuting to college saves money. Another option is attending a lower cost college for the first two years.

Do not hesitate to ask your counselor or the college for advice if you need help. The college that offers you admission will want to help you afford to attend. Even if you do not receive aid one year, you may receive it the following year should your situation change or should more funds become available.

Some final financial aid tips:

- * Learn about financial aid and create a plan early.
- * Investigate every source of help.
- * Request college admission and financial aid information.
- * Know which applications to file and their deadlines.
- * Complete all applications accurately and legibly.
- * Mail admission and aid applications before the deadlines.
- * Mail Profile and Free Applications for Federal Student Aid as soon as possible after January 1. If you plan to attend a college in New York, plan to file a TAP form.
- * Respond promptly to requests for additional information.
- * Keep copies of all documents.
- * Research alternatives to financial aid.
- * Ask questions. A misunderstanding can prevent you from obtaining financial aid for which you may qualify.
- * Inform your college's financial aid office of any circumstances, which could favorably alter your financial aid package. Take time to meet with someone in the aid office. They may be able to assist you in obtaining increased financial support.

Some suggested readings on financial aid include:

- * The College Cost Book. College Board Publications, Box 886, New York.
- * Dennis, Marguerite J. 1986. Mortgaged Futures: How to Graduate from School Without Going Broke. Washington, DC: Hope Press.
- * Financial Aids for Higher Education: A Catalog for Undergraduates. Wm. C. Brown, Dubuque, Iowa.
- * How the Military Will Help You Pay for College: The High School Student's Guide to ROTC, the Academies, and Special Programs. Second edition. Don M. Betterton. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Leider, Robert. 1988. Don't Miss Out: The Ambitious Student's Guide to Financial Aid. Alexandria, VA: Ocameron Associates.
- * Need a Life? To Educational Opportunities, Careers, Loans, Scholarships, Employment. Single copies available from local American Legion Posts. Copies in quantity available from the American Legion, "Need a Lift?", P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.
- * Peterson's College Money Handbook 1996. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Peterson's Financial Aid Service 1996. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * The Student Guide: Financial Aid from the U.S. Department of Education. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. (Published annually. Available free at the counseling office).
- * Summer Jobs: Opportunities in the Federal Government. U.S. Office of Personnel Management (formerly U.S. Civil Service Commission). 1900 E. Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20415.

CHAPTER NINE

Finalizing College Plans

The last step in the college application process is accepting admission to the college you will be attending and declining offers from other colleges. This is a critical time in your planning for the future. You will want to consider all the factors in making your final decision. The college you will attend should be a good match to your plans for location, costs, financial aid, size and facilities, and other important factors. There are other final activities you may also need to complete before entering college. These activities include the following:

- Talk to your parents and counselor about schools which have accepted you. When you have made a decision, send an acceptance letter to that school. Notify the other schools that had accepted you that you will not be attending. Once you accept admission, make sure that you meet all deadlines for that particular college's admissions requirements. Inform your counselor of your final college decision.
- Send your acceptance deposit by the deadline, or you could forfeit your acceptance.
- Check with the college to make sure all required forms have been submitted. The Counseling office will send your final transcript to the college after graduation.
- If necessary, take any placement tests the college requires.
- Make housing arrangements with the college you have accepted. Many colleges require a deposit to be sent to secure on-campus housing for the following year. Make sure you send the deposit in before the deadline. Some colleges require freshman students to live on campus, so missing the housing deposit could delay your college entrance.
- Concentrate on keeping your grades up. College admission often is contingent upon successful completion of your high school course work.
- Continue to investigate scholarship or financial aid possibilities. If you have accepted any work-study programs, act quickly since many of the more desirable work-study positions can be filled fast.
- Be prepared to attend an orientation session. Many colleges register you for fall classes during that time. Review the catalog to be best prepared for choices you may need to make.
- Utilize any opportunities over the summer to prepare for college. If you are lacking solid academic preparation, you could take a course at a local college to help you for the fall semester. Summer employment or volunteer work related to your

college major can be valuable in preparing you for college.

Some suggested readings:

- * College 101: Making the Most of Your Freshman Year. Reviewed edition. Ronald T. Farrar. Peterson's Guides, Princeton, New Jersey.
- * Peterson's National College Databank: The College Book of Lists. Fifth edition. Peterson's Guides. Princeton, New Jersey.
- * College: The Undergraduate Experience in America. Ernest L. Boyer. Harper & Row, New York, New York 10022.

GLOSSARY:

Commonly Used Terms in College Preparation:

***Accreditation:** The recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies indicating that the institution as a whole has been judged to be meeting its objectives.

***ACT Assessment (ACT):** The group of tests administered by The American College Testing Program and required or recommended by many colleges as part of the admission process. They measure educational development in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. These tests are given at specified test centers throughout the year.

***Associates Degree (A.A., A.S.):** A two-year degree, which generally prepares the student for further study. Some Associate's Degree programs are sufficient training for certain careers, but many students in two-year colleges intend to complete their studies at four-year colleges.

***Admissions Testing Program (ATP):** The name given by the College Board to the array of tests used in the college admissions process.

***Bachelor's Degree (B.A. – Bachelor of Arts, B.S.):** Bachelor of Science, B.F.A. - Bachelor of Fine Arts): A four-year degree in a specified subject.

Business Schools and Vocational Schools: A school that offers skill programs in specific areas, such as secretarial science, automotive technology, etc. Some offer Associate Degrees.

***College Calendars:**

Traditional Semester: Two approximately equal semesters.

Early Semester: Two semesters, the first semester is completed before Christmas.

Quarter: Three equal terms of about twelve weeks each.

Trimester: A calendar year divided into three equal semesters, a third semester replaces summer school.

4-1-4: Two equal terms of about 16 weeks each, with a 4-week interim term.

***Career-Oriented Program:** A group of courses which prepares students primarily for employment, often in a specific occupation. Such a program, which can last a few months or more than two years, may lead to a certificate, diploma, or associate degree.

***CHOICES Computer Software:** Comprehensive career/college exploration and information system. Databases include occupations, post-secondary schools and financial aid awards. Students may access Choices in the counseling office, the library or the computer lab.

***College Board:** A nonprofit organization governed by college and secondary school members. The College Board is the overseeing agency for many tests and services connected with the college admissions process.

***College Nights and Fairs:** Programs organized by high schools or local educational associations to give students and their parents an opportunity to meet and talk with college representatives.

***College Transfer Courses:** Courses intended for transfer of college credit to bachelor's degree programs elsewhere.

***College Work-Study Programs:** A federally supported program that provides work compensation to students who demonstrate need and who are willing to be employed at the college.

***Cooperative Work-Study Education:** A program in which the student alternates between full-time college studies and full-time paid employment related to the area of study. Under this plan, the bachelor's degree often requires five years to complete.

***Common Application:** A common application that allows a student to fill out one application form and photocopy the application and recommendation forms for filing at more than one college. You should check with the admissions office to see if a college will accept the

Common Application and if any supplements are required. Check with the counseling office to see which forms are available.

***Community or Junior College:** A college for students who study for a two-year degree, which may prepare the student for further study. Some Associate's Degree programs are sufficient training for certain careers, but many students in two-year colleges intend to complete their studies at a four-year college.

***Deferred Admission:** The practice of some colleges of allowing an accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

***Early Action:** An admission program used primarily in highly selective colleges. Early Action follows the same application/notification timetable as Early Decision but allows the accepted candidates until May 1st to accept or decline the offer of admission. Under Early Action programs, it is possible for an applicant to be denied admission outright and not automatically deferred for later consideration. If your junior year credentials are not truly superior, you may be careful about applying under a plan, which could harm your chance for admission.

****Important Note:** There are several variations of Early Decision and Early Action at different colleges. Read the literature of each college carefully and ask questions if you do not understand the program entirely.

***Early Admission:** A college admitting students of superior ability into college courses and programs before they have completed the standard high school program.

***Early Decision:** An Early Decision (E.D.) is a plan under which a student applies to the first-choice college early in the fall (usually by November 1st) of the senior year and agrees by contract to enter that college if offered admission. Decisions are rendered to Early Decision applications in early December. If not accepted under Early Decision, a student is usually reconsidered for admission later in the senior year. A student should not apply to more than one college under an Early Decision plan, since the student is usually required to withdraw any applications which might have been filed at other colleges while awaiting the decision of the Early Decision college. Early Decision applicants are judged on the basis of their junior year test scores, class rank and grades. It is also important to note that if you have a definite first-choice college, you might apply Early Decision to signify the level of interest in that college.

***Enrollment Deposit:** A non-refundable deposit is required of accepted students at many colleges and universities to reserve a space in the incoming class.

***Educational Testing Service (ETS):** A nonprofit agency employed by the College Board to produce its tests.

***Family Contribution:** The amount an outside agency estimates that you and your family should be able to contribute to the costs of your college education, as determined by such factors as your parent's income, assets and debts; your earnings and savings; and the number of children in your family currently in college.

***Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** A Student must file this free application, distributed in December of the senior year, to obtain any federal assistance (i.e. grants, loans, work study).

***CCS/Financial Aid Profile:** A form used by the College Scholarship Service to collect information about the student's total family income, assets, and expenses, and to analyze the family's potential contribution toward college expenses.

***Grade Point Average (GPA):** An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance. The GPA is computed by totaling the number of grade points earned in each course (generally, A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) and then dividing the sum by the total number of courses carried.

***Honors Program:** A program offering opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent advanced or accelerated study.

***Independent Study:** An arrangement which allows the student to earn college credit through individual study, usually planned with and supervised by a faculty advisor.

***January Admission:** A college admission policy, which admits freshmen to begin study in the middle of the academic year. January admission may be an option worthy of investigation for students who might graduate a term or semester early from high school.

***Major:** The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years.

***Military Schools:** The federal military academics prepare officers for the Army, Navy and Air Force. These institutions (West Point, Annapolis, and Air Force Academy) require recommendations and appointments by members of Congress.

***National Merit Scholarships:** The National Merit Scholarships are given to students who are selected on the basis of PSAT/NMSQT scores and other criteria to be Merit Scholars.

***Nursing Schools:** A nursing school can be categorized as one of three types. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive R.N. degrees upon completion of this training. At two-year colleges, students receive the R.N. plus an Associate's Degree and has the possibility of transferring to a four-year program. At schools affiliated with four-year colleges, students receive both a B.S. degree and an R.N. and have possibilities of entering the field of nursing administration.

***Open Admissions:** The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission test scores.

***Pell Grantt:** Financial assistance, awarded by the federal government on the basis of need designed to provide the basis of any aid package for post-secondary education. The grant may be used toward tuition, room and board, books or other educational costs and requires no repayment.

***PLAN:** A practice ACT test for sophomores. This program also has an interest inventory to start student's search into the career field that is well suited to them. A study skills portion also gives information on the student's present work habits.

***Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT):** A program designed to provide a practice test for juniors as a warm-up for the SAT I.

***Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC):** Air Force, Army and Navy programs on certain campuses which combine military education with baccalaureate degree study, often with financial support for those students who commit themselves to future service in the Armed Forces.

***Rolling Admissions:** A process used by most colleges in the country which may vary in several ways, but the most significant variation follows: A college using rolling admissions will review applications as the application (and all the supporting data) are completed and will return decisions within a few weeks after completion. Another variation in the process is that some colleges send decisions as soon as the application is completed and reviewed, regardless of the time of year. Other colleges will accumulate applications and send decisions only after a particular date.

***Scholastic Aptitude Test I: Reasoning Tests (SAT I):** Test of verbal and mathematical abilities given by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEED) at specified test centers throughout the year. Required or recommended by colleges as part of the admission process.

***Scholastic Aptitude Test II: Subject Tests (SAT II):** Often taken at the end of the junior year and possibly in the fall of the senior year. SAT II tests are administered in a variety of academic subjects and are designed to test the level of knowledge of a student in particular academic discipline in relation to other students throughout the country. SAT II are scored on the same 200 to 800 basis as the SAT I. Some colleges use the SAT II for placement in various levels of freshman courses; some use them as an additional indicator in the admissions process. The SAT II is part of the Admissions Testing Program (ATP) of the College Entrance Examination Board.

***Shadowing Program:** A program, which offers an opportunity for students to spend a day observing someone in an occupation, which is of interest to the student. Students will get a first-hand view of a career, which they are exploring. This is viewed as another learning exposure, which should complement the student's academic experience.

***Stafford Loan:** The Stafford Loan allows students and parents to borrow through local lenders and have their loans guaranteed against default by the government.

***State University of New York (SUNY):** A network of 64 public colleges throughout New York State. The application form for the SUNY schools is available to students in the counseling office. Students may apply to as many as four colleges on one application form.

***Transcript:** An official record of high school grades generally required as part of the college application.

***Tuition Assistance Program (TAP):** A New York State grant program based on net taxable income, which can only be applied to schools in New York State. TAP applications will automatically be mailed once you have filled out and sent a FAFSA application, which lists a New York State College.

***Undergraduate Degrees:** These degrees refer to two-year (Associate's) or four-year (Bachelor's) degrees.

***University:** An institution, which is called a university, may be the same as a college, but usually offers graduate degrees in addition to undergraduate degrees.

***Waiting List:** A list of students who were not initially accepted by an institution but who will be accepted at a later date if space becomes available. In many cases, waiting list candidates are not notified of the final decision until late in the summer.

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State University of New York: A University Viewbook. 1990.

