

mount pisgah
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

College Counseling Handbook 2019 - 2020

**The mission of Mount Pisgah Christian School is to provide
an outstanding college-preparatory education grounded in
Christian faith and values.**

The College Counseling Handbook 2019–2020

A Guide to the College Admissions Process for Students and Parents

Mount Pisgah Christian School

9820 Nesbit Ferry Road
Johns Creek, Georgia 30022
678-336-3402

School Code/CEEB Code: 110062

OUR MISSION: *To help our students find learning environments that best fit their academic needs, unique talents, and interests.*

Susan Reilly, Director of College Counseling 678-336-3439
sreilly@mountpisgahschool.org

Diane Nardella, School Counselor 678-336-3417
dnardella@mountpisgahschool.org

LaTonia Anthony, AP and Testing Coordinator.....678-336-3420
lanthony@mountpisgahschool.org

Angela Crosby, Athletic Liason.....678-336-3350
acrosby@mountpisgahschool.org

Elaine Walker, Registrar and Administrative Assistant..... 678-336-3423
ewalker@mountpisgahschool.org

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He shall establish your plans.
Proverbs 16:3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-------|
| College Planning..... | 3 |
| • Freshman/Sophomore Years | 4 |
| • Junior Year | 5 |
| • Senior Year | 6-8 |
| Information Sessions | 8 |
| Making Your Selection | 9 |
| When and How to Apply | 10-13 |
| Naviance Family Connection | 14 |
| SAT/ACT Test Dates 2019-2020..... | 14 |
| Senior Year Checklist | 15 |
| Service Academies..... | 16 |
| International Students..... | 17 |
| College Athletics..... | 18 |
| A Different Kind of Checklist..... | 19 |
| Suggested Reading | 20 |
| Glossary of Terms..... | 21 |
| Portrait of the Mount Pisgah Graduate..... | 23 |

College Planning

AS A COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL, Mount Pisgah Christian School is committed to helping you with your college planning. Our curriculum is designed to meet the admissions requirements of colleges and universities around the world and to prepare you for the rigors of collegiate academia. By your junior year, you should start to form your personal objectives and education plans and assess your potential and performance. By gaining an honest understanding of who you are, you will be better able to select those colleges that can provide an appropriately challenging and enjoyable environment for you. When you choose the right fit, you open yourself up to the best possible opportunities to grow, learn and thrive in all aspects of your life.

This handbook has been prepared to assist you in the college admissions process. It provides timelines, explains important procedures and lists valuable resources to help you. Of course, the responsibility for your college choices, applications and enrollment as well as researching and applying for scholarships and financial aid awards must ultimately rest with you and your family. As you explore colleges, complete applications and attend to other admissions procedures, we hope that you and your parents will refer to the information here and that you will find it helpful.

COLLEGE COUNSELING

OUR COUNSELORS, Susan Reilly and Diane Nardella, work closely together and are your most accessible sources of information on college admissions. Each year they meet with all students to review their transcripts and strength of schedule and obtain guidance in their course selection for the upcoming year. Because the college process is a developmental one, we believe that the appropriate time to begin OUR college counseling work with students is during the second half of junior year. Prior to this point, we want students to fully participate in the life of the school and to establish a love of learning.

In the spring of your junior year, you will begin to research colleges and identify ones that seem to meet your requirements. Mrs. Reilly and Mrs. Nardella will provide college planning information sessions in your English classes and study halls, will meet with each of you individually regarding your college list and will teach you how to navigate the web-based college planning software Naviance. During the fall of your senior year, the counselors will confer with you as necessary to assist in making final decisions about the colleges to which you will apply.

Mrs. Reilly and Mrs. Nardella serve as your liaisons with college admissions offices. Although it is the responsibility of the college counselors to send your official school records to colleges, it is your responsibility to ask them to do so. It is important that you understand and carefully follow the procedure we have for requesting the transmission or mailing of recommendations and transcripts. Particularly important is the use of the green Application Cover Sheet, a document you will need for each college to which you apply.

SUMMER PROCEDURES

THE COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE is open during the summer but due to scheduled vacation time, it is important that you know we may not be available for immediate assistance. As long as we have advance notice, we should be able to fulfill your requests.

FOUR-YEAR OVERVIEW

WE ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO MAKE CHOICES not by what they believe college admissions want to see, but instead to follow their passions and seek a balance of faith and knowledge, so that they can become successful and creative contributors to the colleges that they attend once they graduate from Mount Pisgah Christian School.

FRESHMAN YEAR

- ❖ Become involved in the Upper School. Take your studies seriously and explore extracurricular opportunities. Set academic goals for the year.
- ❖ Create a system for keeping up with your activities, leadership positions, community service, honors, awards, summer experiences and jobs. Update your extracurricular activities each semester.
- ❖ Evaluate your grades each quarter and determine what you are doing well and what you need to improve. Attend extra help sessions when your teachers offer them! Remember that you are building your record for college admission beginning your freshman year.
- ❖ During second semester, you will meet with an advisor to discuss your academic and extracurricular plan.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- ❖ Update the activities list you began freshman year. Review your academic goals.
- ❖ Prepare to take the PSAT in October. Use the PSAT Student Bulletin and practice test that you will receive from us to become more familiar with the test format. You may also want to visit the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com for more information.
- ❖ Take the PSAT in October. This test is administered at school and helps you to prepare for the SAT. You will take the PSAT again at the beginning of your junior year.
- ❖ Evaluate your performance and your interest in each academic area. If you are strong in a particular subject or subjects, consult with your teachers about taking Honors or Advanced Placement courses your junior year. You will meet in advisory to discuss your options.
- ❖ Parents should attend “College Night” in the spring. A similar presentation will take place for you in your English classes.
- ❖ If family travels bring you near a college or university, consider an informal visit.
- ❖ If appropriate, take SAT Subject Tests in June (for example, World History).
- ❖ Consider taking an SAT or ACT prep class.

JUNIOR YEAR

August/September

- ❖ Review your academic plans for Upper School and continue to update the activities list you began as a freshman.
- ❖ Register (at school) with the Naviance Student website to start your initial list of colleges and conduct research. Naviance has some great tools for college exploration.
- ❖ Prepare for the October PSAT. While this is still a practice test for the SAT, juniors who score exceptionally well on the PSAT may be considered for participation in the National Merit Scholarship competition.
- ❖ Be sure to attend some of the college information sessions that take place at Mount Pisgah. Listen to the presentations and ask questions about your particular interests. Pick up admission materials and complete the information cards provided by the college reps so that you will be added to the schools' mailing lists.

October

- ❖ Take the PSAT on the national test date, administered at school.
- ❖ Begin to establish criteria for the type of college that you would like to attend. Use college guides and the internet to find schools that meet your criteria. Talk to family, friends and teachers about their college choices and experiences.
- ❖ Parents should attend "College Night." You will attend the same presentation during the school day in your English class.

November

- ❖ Evaluate your progress report grades and determine what you need to improve to meet your academic goals for the year. The grade point average provided to colleges when you apply is cumulative through the end of junior year.
- ❖ Register for your first SAT or ACT. Colleges accept either the SAT or the ACT. You may score higher on one than the other, so we recommend taking both.

December

- ❖ Study thoroughly for your exams and attend any extra help sessions that your teachers offer.

January

- ❖ Schedule an appointment with Mrs. Reilly regarding your schedule for senior year.
- ❖ Prepare for the SAT and/or the ACT.
- ❖ Look ahead to spring break/summer as possible opportunities to visit colleges.
- ❖ Complete the Student Questionnaire in your Naviance Student account.

February

- ❖ Determine with Mrs. Reilly/Mrs. Nardella if you should take the SAT Subject Tests.
- ❖ Register for the “School Day SAT” in April.
- ❖ Continue your college research.
- ❖ Schedule an individual appointment with your college counselor regarding your college list and interests.

March

- ❖ By now you should have created a preliminary college list on Naviance.
- ❖ Register for all remaining junior year standardized tests.
- ❖ Utilize spring break for college visits.

April

- ❖ Take the “School Day SAT”
- ❖ Research which colleges on your list require TEACHER recommendations in addition to the COUNSELOR recommendation. If you have colleges that do require them, consider which teacher(s) you might ask.
- ❖ Begin to think about essay topics for your college applications.

May

- ❖ If you are enrolled in AP courses, take the AP exams given in May.
- ❖ Give serious time to preparing for all of your final exams.
- ❖ Discuss with Mrs. Reilly about requesting recommendations from teachers.

June/July

- ❖ Spend your summer productively.
- ❖ Narrow your college list. Aim for a final list of at least three or four schools.
- ❖ Visit www.commonapp.org, www.mycoalition.org, or individual college websites to preview application and essay questions.
- ❖ Consider essay topics. Look for opportunities to use an essay for more than one application. Write rough drafts of essay topics and all applications. You will be glad you did!

SENIOR YEAR

August

- ❖ Attend one of the Application Kick-Off sessions at school.
- ❖ Register for the “School Day ACT” in October. Deadline is mid-August.
- ❖ Note all registration deadlines for fall SAT and SAT Subject Tests, and complete registration promptly if applicable.
- ❖ See Mrs. Reilly/Mrs. Nardella to update your final list of colleges. Know your deadlines!
- ❖ Begin work on all Early Decision/Early Action/Rolling applications.
- ❖ If you need a teacher recommendation and have not made a request, now is the time!

September

- ❖ College information sessions will begin to take place at Mount Pisgah. Be sure to attend if you are interested in a particular college that comes to our campus.
- ❖ Complete all ED/EA/Rolling applications. We highly recommend completing these applications **BY OCTOBER 1**.
- ❖ Prepare to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as soon as possible after October 1. It is required in order to receive any need-based financial aid, or federal student and parent loans. The application can be found online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- ❖ If you are applying to private colleges and selective state universities and plan to seek financial aid, check to see if they require you to file the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA. The CSS Profile gives families and colleges an early read on a student's eligibility for financial aid. Visit the College Board website for more information: www.collegeboard.com.

October

- ❖ Take the "School Day ACT", if applicable.
- ❖ See your English teachers or Mrs. Reilly to review your college essays.
- ❖ Submit any ED/EA applications at least one week before the college's due date. In some cases, this will mean the first week of OCTOBER.
- ❖ Once you have submitted your application online, you will need to submit an Application Cover Sheet to Mrs. Reilly. Again, this must be done for ED/EA applications at least one week before the college's due date.
- ❖ Some competitive scholarship applications have deadlines in October and November (for example: Georgia Tech, Emory, Vanderbilt, Sewanee). Be cognizant of these deadlines, and consult with Mrs. Reilly as you complete the application requirements.
- ❖ Retake the ACT, SAT or Subject Tests, if applicable.

November

- ❖ Finalize the remainder of your applications. All should be completed by **DECEMBER 1!**
- ❖ Retake the SAT or Subject Tests, if applicable.

December

- ❖ Complete remaining applications by **DECEMBER 10!** This is extremely important for meeting January deadlines. The office is closed during Christmas break and no supporting documents will be sent at this time.

January/February

- ❖ The College Counseling Office keeps records of all applications submitted and sends required mid-year grades for each student.
- ❖ Complete any regular decision applications, although most deadlines have now passed.
- ❖ Note financial aid application deadlines, and submit the FAFSA and, if necessary, the CSS Profile. Colleges' aid deadlines must be met or aid may not be available.

March

- ❖ Regular decision colleges notify students of admission decisions from mid-March through April 1. Please update your Naviance account with all decisions received.
- ❖ If placed on the waiting list of a school you would like to attend, send additional information to update and support your application at this time.

April

- ❖ If necessary, attend “Accepted Student” events to help with your decision.
- ❖ Notify the college you will attend prior to May 1 (National Reply Date), and notify all other colleges of your decision as well. This helps colleges make decisions on wait-list candidates.
- ❖ **DO NOT DOUBLE DEPOSIT** to buy time! This can result rescinded acceptances.
- ❖ Prepare for AP exams to be held in early May.

May

- ❖ Be sure that your deposit reaches the college of your choice by May 1 (National Reply Date).
- ❖ **Congratulations on your graduation from Mount Pisgah Christian School! Enjoy the summer—you are going to college!**

Information Sessions

PARENTS are invited to attend several informational sessions throughout the year that are designed to assist in the four-year college planning process. Below is a sample of events that we offer. Dates, times and locations will be posted on the school website as they become available.

- Parent Coffees for Grades 9-12
- Application Kick-Off Meeting (beginning of senior year)
- Strategic Course Selection Night for Grades 9-11
- Junior Parents College Night
- Freshman/Sophomore Parents College Night
- Financial Aid Night

STUDENTS are engaged in various information sessions throughout the year as well, and these sessions typically take place during the school day. These sessions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Application Kick-Off Meeting for Seniors
- Naviance Student Registration and Training
- College Mini-Fair
- Course Selection and Goals Meetings
- College Information Sessions
- GPA Game (during Health classes)
- Resume Workshop

Making Your Selection

THE QUALITY OF THE EDUCATION you receive in college will be affected far more by YOUR **DESIRE** to learn and YOUR **ATTITUDE** toward the total experience than by the institution itself. Considering a certain college as the only one you could be happy attending is being unrealistic and unfair to yourself.

Your choice of the colleges to which you apply will be based on several considerations:

1. Your personal academic goals, ability and achievement in relation to the academic program of the college and the academic ability and achievement of the average student recently enrolled there (college handbooks and freshman class profiles provide these statistics);
2. Culture of the campus as a community (social life, student organizations, athletics, etc.);
3. Geographical location;
4. Size of the institution;
5. Your impression of the college based on campus visits, conversations with official representatives, alumni or current students and study of the website and viewbooks; and
6. Cost of attending the school (taking potential financial aid and scholarships into consideration).

VISITING COLLEGES

ALL STUDENTS are permitted **three days per year** to visit prospective colleges. Students should make an appointment with the Director of College Counseling to discuss the proposed visit and, if deemed appropriate, must then complete a *Student Request for College Visit* form, which will need to be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the office 5 days prior to the absence. Please remember that the following also applies to a college visit absence:

1. Assignments missed during college visitation days should be turned into the teacher prior to the visit unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.
2. College visitation days will not be granted during final exams or other critical days, including the Sharp Top retreat.
3. Students who do not plan college visits in advance and do not turn in the *Student Request for College Visit* form before their departure may be asked to subtract the days absent from the total of eight they receive for the semester.

HOW MANY COLLEGES?

WE GENERALLY RECOMMEND, with the exception of Early Decision candidates, that a student should submit applications to at least three or four colleges. This number may vary in certain circumstances. Ideally, you should know the colleges to which you are going to apply when you return to school in August of your senior year.

When and How to Apply

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for completing and submitting all college applications. Read carefully and complete all of the information requested, using correct punctuation. Use your full name; do not use nicknames.

INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

School Code/CEEB Code: 110062

Fax: 678-623-5574

Principal: Mary Ann Morris; 678-336-3402; mmorris@mountpisgahschool.org

College Counselor: Susan Reilly; 678-336-3439; sreilly@mountpisgahschool.org

School Address: Mount Pisgah Christian School
9820 Nesbit Ferry Road
Johns Creek, GA 30022

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

- **Know your deadlines!** Early Decision, Early Action and Priority have fall deadlines and winter notifications. Regular Decision has winter deadlines and spring notifications. Rolling Admissions send notifications as applications are received and reviewed.
- **School Specific Application:** Go to the admissions website and complete the online version for that specific school. Some examples of School Specific: Auburn, Alabama, Georgia Southern, Kennesaw State.
- **Common Application:** Go to www.commonapp.org and complete the online application. In addition to the common application, you will need to complete a school specific **supplement**. If you plan to compete in athletics or participate in the arts, be sure to follow the prompts for any additional information required.
- **Coalition Application:** This is the newest application platform. The number of colleges subscribing increases each year. Universities of Florida, Maryland, and Washington are Coalition “exclusive”. www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org.
- **Essay(s):** Allow plenty of time to work on your essays if they are required so that you can revise them as needed. The college counselors and English teachers are available to review essays as long as you submit them well in advance of deadlines.
- **Teacher Recommendations:** If required as part of the application, you will have to ask a teacher who knows you well to write you a recommendation. Typically, this should be a teacher from your junior year who knows you well. Consider a class in which you struggled to achieve your grade rather than cruising to an easy “A.”

- **Counselor Recommendation:** Mrs. Reilly writes a recommendation for each student. To ensure the best possible recommendation, each student and parent(s) should complete their respective questionnaires before the application process begins. These questionnaires can be found on your Naviance Student account.

SENDING TEST SCORES

- If you did not have your ACT/SAT scores sent automatically when you registered for the test, you will need to log on to the ACT or College Board account that you created when you registered for the test and complete the process online. There is a charge to do so; be sure to have a credit card available. If you are unsure of what to do, contact Mrs. Reilly.
- **ACT:** www.actstudent.org
- **SAT/SAT Subject Tests:** www.sat.org

SENDING THE APPLICATION

- Once the application has been submitted, PRINT OUT THE CONFIRMATION PAGE OR CONFIRMATION E-MAIL.
- If required, print out the Counselor Recommendation/Secondary School Report Form (if it's not completed online) and complete your portion of the form.
- Submit your application fee online.

REQUESTING TO SEND YOUR TRANSCRIPT

- All of the above steps must be completed before a transcript can be requested.
- Complete the **Mount Pisgah Application Cover Sheet**, attach all above mentioned items to the cover sheet and submit to the College Counseling Office.
- Submit a transcript request on your Naviance Family Connection account.
- We take care of the rest!
- Congratulations—you're done!

THE ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWS ARE SOMETIMES OFFERED OR REQUIRED by the colleges to which you are applying. Interviews can be conducted by admissions counselors, alumni representatives and even current students, but regardless of who is conducting the interview, you should ALWAYS be prepared. Some schools will tell you that their interviews are informational rather than evaluative, and you should ALWAYS respond as if the interview is evaluative.

In addition to answering questions, you should also have in mind some interesting questions that you can ask your interviewer. Do not ask questions whose obvious answers can be found on the college website or in a view book. **Mrs. Reilly and Mrs. Nardella have a list of sample questions that you can obtain from their office.** Be alert, sincere, natural and serious about this undertaking. Be sure to dress appropriately. You are not expected to wear your Sunday best, especially if you are touring the college on the same day; however, do not wear T-shirts, flip flops, tops that show your midriff, etc. Before the interview, be sure to carefully review the college's view book and any other printed or visual material you can obtain. Being well informed is a plus! Please note that some schools offer alumni interviews that can take place near your home. Check with the schools to which you are applying to understand their policies. ALWAYS take the opportunity for an interview if it is offered.

A COLLEGE'S DECISION

ALL COLLEGES DO NOT USE THE SAME METHOD WHEN EVALUATING APPLICATIONS. Some schools base their admissions decisions using empirical data only (GPA and test scores). Other schools base their admissions decisions using a holistic approach, which would include *some or all of the following criteria*:

- High school grades
- Rigor of course selection
- Test scores (SAT or ACT)
- SAT Subject Tests
- Extracurricular endeavors, evidence of talent (athletic, musical, etc.), leadership, balance, maturity and good citizenship at school and in the community
- Counselor letter of recommendation
- Teacher(s) letter of recommendation(s)
- Student application essays
- Interview
- Legacy (this does not ensure acceptance by any means)

MANY PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE NOW “TEST OPTIONAL”. This means that if your test scores are not indicative of your academic ability in the classroom, you may choose to be evaluated without sending them. The school may require a graded paper or an interview instead, so if you choose to go this route, be cognizant of what else may be required of you. This can be extremely beneficial to students who have performed well at a rigorous level but do not test well.

FACTS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

NEED-BASED AID is financial assistance for families who qualify as determined by the federal government and the colleges to which the student has applied for admission. All colleges are required to post a Net Price Calculator on their admissions websites to help families determine if they would be eligible for aid and if so, an estimate of what that amount might be.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS provide financial assistance and are awarded to students based solely on their academic/extracurricular achievements. Merit aid does not factor in family income or a family's determined financial need for college.

- Merit scholarships that are funded solely by a college can only be applied to that specific college. These scholarship awards are typically renewable for four years, as long as the student meets the academic or extra-curricular requirements set forth by the college. This would include athletic scholarship awards.
- Merit scholarships from outside sources exist as well. They are not funded by a college, but instead are funded by a corporation, organization or foundation. These scholarships require a separate application and are non-renewable. The benefit is that these scholarships are “portable” because the award can be used at any college that a student chooses to attend.

While your counselors will help as much as possible, you and your parents are ultimately responsible for finding scholarships that are suitable for you at the individual schools and for knowing specific details about the nature of the awards, how to apply (nominations, automatically considered, etc.) and any other steps necessary to ensure your consideration.

If you plan to apply for need-based aid, your parents must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and possibly College Board's CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service). These forms are used to help colleges determine how much financial aid a student needs. They ask for information regarding your family's financial situation. This process can be simplified if your parents use the IRS Data Retrieval option, which electronically transfers a family's tax return information from the IRS directly to the FAFSA form.

NOTE: You will need to fill out the CSS Profile only if applying to private schools and a few public institutions. There is a fee charged for processing this form. The FAFSA must be filled out for all schools, public and private, and it is free of charge. It is important to be aware of the college deadlines for these forms and submit them in a timely manner. Late submissions are not given as much consideration.

WHEN YOU ARE ACCEPTED

EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION notifications generally come between late November and mid-January. Colleges with a rolling admissions policy usually respond within four to six weeks after receipt of your complete application. Regular Decision notifications from most other colleges will arrive between March 1 and April 15. You may accept or decline an admission offer as soon as you are certain of your plans; however, it is important to know that you are not required to do so until May 1, which is the National Reply Date for all colleges and universities. The only exception to this is if you are admitted Early Decision, in which case the college offering admission will expect a prompt reply accompanied by a deposit of up to \$500.00.

If you are having a difficult time deciding between two schools and the deadline is approaching, please remember that **YOU MAY NOT SEND A DEPOSIT TO MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL** in the hopes of extending your decision. This is not considered to be good practice, and could jeopardize your acceptance to both schools. We will only send final transcripts to the one school you will attend and to any schools where you are wait-listed and choose to remain on the wait list.

If you are wait-listed at your first-choice college, you must still commit by May 1 to your second-choice school. If you clear the wait-list during the summer and decide to attend that college, you will have to notify the school whose offer you originally accepted, and you will lose your deposit.

Naviance Student

Naviance is a web-based resource that we use to manage each student's college search and application process. It is the interface through which students, parents and counselors can receive and share information. Below is a list of just some of the benefits of using Naviance:

- Maintain the student's profile
- Conduct a college search
- College comparisons
- Link students to college websites
- Maintain a list of colleges to which you are applying
- Inform students of upcoming college rep visits on our campus
- Track deadlines

The web link to Mount Pisgah's Naviance page is: <http://student.naviance.com/mpcs>.
Registration codes for parents/students are provided at the beginning of junior year.

Test Dates 2019-2020

| DATE | TEST | REGISTRATION DEADLINE |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|
| AUG 24 | SAT/SAT Subjects | JUL 26 |
| SEP 14 | ACT | AUG 16 |
| OCT 1 | ACT School Day* | AUG 24 |
| OCT 5 | SAT/SAT Subjects | SEP 6 |
| OCT 16 | PSAT/NMSQT | TBA at school |
| OCT 26 | ACT | SEP 20 |
| NOV 2 | SAT/SAT Subjects | OCT 3 |
| DEC 7 | SAT/SAT Subjects | NOV 8 |
| DEC 14 | ACT | NOV 8 |
| FEB 8 | ACT | JAN 10 |
| MAR 14 | SAT only | FEB 14 |
| TBA | SAT School Day** | TBA |
| APR 4 | ACT | FEB 28 |
| MAY 2 | SAT/SAT Subjects | APR 3 |
| MAY 6-10 | AP Exams | TBA at school |
| MAY 13-17 | AP Exams | TBA at school |
| JUN 6 | SAT/SAT Subjects | MAY 8 |
| JUN 13 | ACT | MAY 8 |
| JUL 18 | ACT | JUN 19 |

*For Seniors only

**For Juniors only

Senior Year Checklist

- REGISTER for school day ACT.
- REGISTER for fall SAT if applicable.
- MEET with your college counselor to review college application plans.
- MATCH your Common App Account with your Naviance Student account.
- KNOW the various pieces required to complete your applications for admission.
- DRAFT college application essay(s) if applicable.
- REQUEST Teacher Recommendations, if applicable.
- FINALIZE college list by SEP 15 for all ED/EA/Rolling apps – OCT 15 for all others.
- ATTEND college rep visits on campus. Schedule is on Naviance.
- SUBMIT applications BEFORE the deadlines.
- SEND SAT/ACT scores from testing agencies to colleges to which you are applying.
- COMPLETE the green Application Cover Sheet after you officially apply to a college, and bring it to the College Counseling Office with any required documents.
- ENTER admission decisions on your Naviance Student account.
- BRING in scholarship-offer letters for documentation.
- DEPOSIT enrollment to ONE college by May 1.
 - If wait-listed at top choice, officially accept a spot on the list.
 - Submit deposit to second-choice college.
 - Inform college counselor of plan to pursue wait-list college.
- Also by May 1, officially decline offer to attend other colleges that have admitted you.
- Final Transcript is submitted to your college choice without having to request it. 😊

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE GOING TO COLLEGE!

Service Academies

As you contemplate applying to the US Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, Military or Naval Academy, you should learn as much as you can about what to expect and consider whether this is an appropriate match for you. Ask yourself:

1. Am I prepared for a very different experience from that of a typical undergraduate?
2. Academic programs at service academies place strong emphasis on math, engineering and physical sciences. Does this match my academic strengths?
3. Am I up for the rigorous physical training that is an important part of a service academy program?
4. Am I willing to commit to the minimum six years of military service required after graduation?

THE APPLICATION PROCESS to a service academy includes several extra steps not encountered when applying to a typical college or university. With the exception of the Coast Guard Academy, which does not require a nomination, the process is similar for all:

- Take the SAT or ACT as soon as possible in the spring of your junior year. Scores will be needed to complete the pre-candidate questionnaire. You can always update your scores if you take them again and improve.
- Complete a pre-candidate questionnaire online to initiate your application. This can begin March 1 of your junior year, and must be completed by December 31 of your senior year. This information will be compiled to determine if you will be granted “Candidate Status.”
- Identify your Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO), and make contact with him or her early in the process. You will interview with your ALO later on, so developing a relationship with this person and staying in contact throughout the process is important.
- Identify teachers who will write recommendations for you, keeping in mind these requirements:
 - 11th or 12th grade English teacher
 - Math teacher
 - One other teacher (preferably science)
- Request a nomination from your U.S. Senators and the Congressperson from your district. Most nomination requests can be initiated between September 1 and October 15 of your senior year.
- If you meet the requirements for Candidate Status, you will receive an e-mail with further instructions on how to proceed.
- Give the Request for Secondary School Transcript to your college counselor to complete. This will be sent along with your transcript, senior class schedule, school profile and recommendations to the academy in the fall of your senior year.

- Train for and take the Candidate Fitness Assessment. You are responsible for finding your examiner and providing him or her with official instructions on how to set up and administer the test. Your coach is a good option.
- Complete the Extracurricular Activities Record.
- As part of the admissions process, you will be required to submit a writing sample and conduct a personal interview.
- Submit your Personal Data Record.
- Complete the Drug/Alcohol Abuse Statement.
- Complete your Medical Evaluation. This can't be scheduled until you have completed three out of five of the following steps: Fitness Assessment, Personal Data Record, Activities Record, Teacher Evaluations, Writing Sample.

International Students

Applying to U.S. colleges and universities as an international student adds a few layers of responsibility and complexity to the process. It's important to be organized and work closely with the College Counseling Office.

THE DEFINITION OF AN “INTERNATIONAL STUDENT” from an admissions standpoint varies depending on the institution. It may be based on citizenship status or how many years you have studied in the U.S. Check with each school to see if you should apply as an international student. If so, check to see if there is a separate application process for international students.

THE TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Most colleges and universities expect students who are not native English speakers to submit a TOEFL score as part of their application. This is especially important for students who have not attended Pisgah for all four years of high school. For more information, and to register, visit the TOEFL website: www.ets.org/toefl.

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS is required by each college or university to which you apply. This guarantees that your family has sufficient funds to support you while you attend college in the U.S. Some colleges have their own form; others use a standard form that is part of the Common Application. The form must be completed and signed by your parents, who then bring it to the bank to be verified and stamped. Be sure to check each school's website for its particular requirements.

FINANCIAL AID Most international students are not eligible for federal aid. However, many colleges and universities have private sources of funds available, and may offer some financial aid to international students. Merit scholarships (not based on financial need) may also be offered to international students with exceptional academic ability or talent.

APPLICATION TIPS As an international applicant it is important to use your official name (as it appears on your passport) on EVERY document submitted as part of an application, as well as when registering for standardized testing. Your birth date should also be correct on all documents.

College Athletics

College athletics take place on three levels: intramural, club and intercollegiate. The intercollegiate level is divided into Divisions I, II and III. To assess your own ability to play at the D I, D II or D III level in college, talk with your coach and attend summer camps in your chosen sport.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY Many college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization that has established rules on eligibility, recruiting and financial aid. NCAA has three membership divisions: D I, D II and D III. Institutions are members of a division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships.

Participation in D I and D II athletics can essentially be a full-time job: 30+ hours per week, year round. D III participation can be intense while in-season (25+ hours per week) but has a less strenuous time commitment off season, leaving more time for academics, extracurricular activities and community service.

D I and D II programs offer athletic scholarships; D III programs do not, though D III athletes often receive aid via grants, loans and awards. The Ivy League competes at the D I level but does not offer athletic scholarships.

No division offers a four-year “full ride” scholarship. All scholarships are renewed each year at the coach’s discretion. Renewal of scholarship for the second, third and fourth years can be impacted by available scholarship money, performance on and off the field and injury.

If you wish to participate in D I or D II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. It ensures consistent interpretation of NCAA eligibility requirements for all prospective student-athletes. Download and read “NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete” for more information.

To complete your registration with the NCAA Eligibility Center, you must do the following:

- Register online at www.eligibilitycenter.org.
- Follow the instructions to request that Mount Pisgah send an official transcript to the Eligibility Center at the end of your junior year.
- SAT or ACT scores must be sent directly to the Eligibility Center from the testing agency. This can be done when you register for the test, using the code 9999. Or, you can also log onto your College Board or ACT account and order an official score report for the Eligibility Center, again using the code 9999.

A Different Kind of Checklist

An excerpt from the New York Times bestseller *How to Raise an Adult* by Julie Lythcott-Haims, former freshman dean at Stanford University.

If we want our kids to have a shot at making it in the world as eighteen-year-olds, without the umbilical cord of the cell phone being their go-to solution in all manner of things, they're going to need a set of basic life skills... here are some examples of practical things they'll need to know how to do before they go to college...

- 1. An eighteen-year-old must be able to talk to strangers**—faculty, deans, advisers, landlords, store clerks, human resource managers, coworkers, bank tellers, health care providers, bus drivers, mechanics—in the real world.
- 2. An eighteen-year-old must be able to find his way around** a campus, the town in which her summer internship is located, or the city where he is working or studying abroad.
- 3. An eighteen-year-old must be able to manage his assignments, workload, and deadlines.**
- 4. An eighteen-year-old must be able to contribute to the running of a household.**
- 5. An eighteen-year-old must be able to handle interpersonal problems.**
- 6. An eighteen-year-old must be able to cope with ups and downs** of courses and workloads, college-level work, competition, tough teachers, bosses, and others.
- 7. An eighteen-year-old must be able to earn and manage money.**
- 8. An eighteen-year-old must be able to take risks.**

Remember: our kids must be able to do all of these things without resorting to calling a parent on the phone. If they're calling us to ask how, they do not have the life skill.

Suggested Reading

Admission Matters: What Students and Parents Need to Know About Getting Into College. Sally P. Springer, Jon Reider and Marion R. Franck. Go-to guide for the college application process.

College Admission: From Application to Acceptance, Step by Step. Robin Mamlet and Christine Vandavelde. Go-to guide for the college application process.

Colleges That Change Lives. Loren Pope. A great case for the top-notch education provided by liberal arts colleges that don't have the big name but are "hidden jewels" and worth investigating.

Colleges That Create Futures: 50 Schools that Launch Careers by Going Beyond the Classroom. The Princeton Review.

The Complete Book of Colleges. The Princeton Review. Latest Edition. Comprehensive guide book to over 1,500 colleges and universities.

Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different. Donald Asher

Fiske Guide to Colleges. Edward B. Fiske. A guide that gives subjective descriptions and rankings of 300 selective colleges. Latest edition.

Getting In. Karen Stabiner. Fiction. Roller-coaster story of five Los Angeles families united by one obsession: acceptance at a top college. A witty tale that takes you through the crazy circus that is college admissions and may give you some perspective on your own application process.

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance. Angela Duckworth. Pioneering psychologist shows parents, students, educators and athletes that the secret to outstanding achievement is not talent, but a special blend of passion and persistence she calls "grit".

The Hidden Ivies: 50 Top Colleges—from Amherst to Williams—That Rival the Ivy League. Howard Greene and Matthew W. Greene

How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Over-Parenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success. Julie Lythcott-Haims

Looking Beyond the Ivy League. Loren Pope. Suggests alternatives that are excellent colleges for students to consider.

K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences. Princeton Review. Valuable resource for students with learning differences.

The Performing Arts Major's College Guide. Carole J. Everett. Helps students through the process of searching for schools, preparing for auditions and applying.

Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania. Frank Bruni. A thought-provoking reminder of what really matters in the college experience.

Note: The above list is not comprehensive. There are many other excellent sources of college admissions information.

Glossary of Terms

ADMISSIONS TERMS

CANDIDATE NOTIFICATION DATE: The date by which a college notifies a student of the admissions decision.

COLLEGE DECISION DAY (a.k.a. National Reply Date): The date by which a student must notify the college of enrollment intentions. This date is usually May 1.

EARLY ACTION (EA): A plan under which a student applies to a college under the same calendar of application and notification as ED, but allows accepted candidates until May 1 to accept or decline the offer of admission. There is no binding contract under this plan to attend an EA school. Most schools will allow students to apply to more than one EA institution. A small number of schools offer a SINGLE CHOICE EARLY ACTION plan, which states that a student can apply EA to only that school, but there is no binding contract to accept an offer of admission.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The number and variety of EA plans have proliferated in recent years. Deadlines can change from year to year. In order to be well informed about the programs at the colleges in which you are interested, read the literature of each one carefully.

EARLY DECISION (ED): A plan under which a student applies to the college of his or her first choice early in the fall of the senior year. The student and his or her parent agree by contract that he or she will attend that college if offered admission. Schools that have only one ED plan typically have a deadline of either October 15 or November 1, and students are notified of decisions in December. Some schools have two ED plans, where ED I has the earlier deadline and ED II has a later deadline with decision notifications made in February or March.

Under the traditional ED plan, a student can apply to only one college or must agree to withdraw all other applications if accepted. Among the many advantages to this plan is that it gives those students who have a definite first choice among colleges the opportunity to indicate to the admissions officers the depth and sincerity of their interest. The disadvantage is that if financial aid is needed, a financial aid package will not be available for review until after the student has agreed to attend.

GPA (Grade Point Average): Our GPA is based on a 100 point scale, and converted to also show a 4.0 scale on the transcript. The cumulative GPA is recalculated at the end of each semester after all classes have been completed and grades have been entered.

NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association, www.ncaa.com): All athletes playing Division I or II sports in college must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and fulfill certain curricular requirements. At the end of your junior year you should complete the online application, and then bring your assigned NCAA registration number to Mrs. Elaine Walker, the registrar, so she can send your transcript. You must also send official copies of your SAT or ACT scores to NCAA directly from the testing agency, using the code 9999.

PRIORITY: Same as Early Action above, however there is no “Single Choice” option.

ROLLING ADMISSION: The student is notified within four to six weeks after all application materials are received by the admissions office. If applying to a school with rolling admission, it is beneficial to apply as early as possible.

STANDARDIZED TESTING TERMS

ACT (American College Test, www.actstudent.org): The American College Testing Program is a national testing service. All colleges accept ACT scores in lieu of SAT scores.

NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test Selection Score): The score used to determine those juniors who will be recognized in the competition for National Merit Scholarships.

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test): Administered at school to all Mount Pisgah students in grades 9-11. This is a preliminary test, and scores are not sent to colleges.

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test of College Entrance Examination Board, www.sat.org): Referred to as the SAT Reasoning Test and designed to assess verbal and mathematical aptitude as well as writing ability. All colleges accept the SAT.

SAT SUBJECT TEST: One-hour test covering specific subject areas. SAT Subject Tests are offered on the same day as the SAT Reasoning Test, and up to three subject tests may be taken in one sitting. Some of the most selective schools require up to three subject tests to be considered for admission, so be sure to check with colleges about their individual requirements.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): This test is taken by international students for whom English is not their first language.

FINANCIAL AID TERMS

CSS PROFILE (College Scholarship Services Profile): Financial aid form from College Board which is usually required by private colleges in addition to the FAFSA. This form can be found on the College Board website and should be sent to CSS in the fall. Unlike the FAFSA, which is free, there is a fee involved to file this application.

EFC (Expected Family Contribution): This estimate of the family's ability to contribute to colleges expenses will be noted in the upper right-hand corner of the SAR.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): This form must be completed for all financial aid considerations that are need-based and many that are merit-based. The FAFSA must be submitted in order to obtain the HOPE Scholarship, unless the school allows an alternate form. This form should be completed as soon as one receives W-2 forms and has filed income tax forms. Deadlines for the FAFSA range from February 1 to March 1, so it is important to be cognizant of each college deadline and file on time. Failure to submit this form early enough may result in less financial aid.

FSA ID (Federal Student Aid Identification, fsaid.ed.gov): An FSA ID must be created before completing the FAFSA. This gives you access to Federal Student Aid's online systems and can serve as your legal signature.

NPC (Net Price Calculator): A tool that is provided on every college website to help families estimate the cost of that particular college relative to that family's financial need.

SAR (Student Aid Report): This is an explanation of potential financial aid benefits which is sent to you after submitting your FAFSA forms.

Portrait of the Mount Pisgah Graduate

The Mount Pisgah Christian School Graduate:

- ❖ Knows and is inspired by the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Values and builds authentic relationships that bring meaning to life, and that strengthen family and community.
- ❖ Achieves a balanced life grounded in spiritual, emotional, and physical health.
- ❖ Solves personal and real world challenges through creative thought, self-advocacy, perseverance, and resilience.
- ❖ Understands and cultivates unique gifts and talents and has the courage to act on convictions.
- ❖ Thinks and communicates with clarity and purpose.
- ❖ Collaborates to accomplish goals, solve problems, and resolve conflict.
- ❖ Respects the dignity of every individual through responsible and empathetic communications and actions.
- ❖ Makes a difference in the community and in the wider world, by working for justice, promoting peace, and protecting God's creation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mount Pisgah Christian School is to provide an outstanding college-preparatory education grounded in Christian faith and values.

“The constant pressure to win good grades and get into THE college can ruin the joy of teaching and of learning. Today more than ever, students can get an excellent education at so many colleges and universities...We need to teach students to love learning, to take risks and know that failure is a part of growing...Which college one attends may influence opportunity at the entry level, but ten years later, it makes no difference in terms of achievement and fulfillment.”

~ New York Times, March 20, 2014