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Dear Parents and College Bound Students,

For students in the 9th or 10th grade this guide is primarily a preview of what is to come. The nitty-gritty of the college selection process begins in the junior year and culminates in the senior year with the arrival of the college decision letters. However, it is important to build a good foundation for your college applications from the start. For that reason, the College Counseling Guide begins with advice for our freshmen and sophomore students. In addition, a look at what lies ahead will help you to plan for the not-so-distant future.

The purpose of this guide is to provide information for students and parents that will assist you to successfully navigate the increasingly complicated world of college admissions. Please read it carefully and keep it handy for reference throughout Upper School. Many of the questions you will have are answered in these pages.

The college search can be one of the most fulfilling experiences in a family's life. The two most important things to remember are that (1) **there is really not just one college that is right for each student**, and (2) **there are excellent colleges to which each child will be accepted**. If you will read and follow the guidelines contained in this handbook, work with reasonable diligence, meet deadlines, and consult with your college counselor regularly you can have a lot of fun.

Effective communication is essential. Let us know what your questions, concerns and aspirations are so that we can provide you with the greatest amount of assistance. Be aware that college counselors function in a world of realities. Not every student will be admitted to an Ivy League school. Not every student has worked hard and taken advantage of opportunities. Do not expect your counselor to tell you or college admissions representatives things that are not true. Do expect your counselor to be your advocate. And remember, the college counselor does not get you into college; you do that.

With great expectations for your success,

Judith Griffith
Head of School

Brooke Martin
Director of College Counseling

FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE YEARS

GRADES

Colleges will see the year-end grades of all Upper School courses beginning with the 9th grade. Therefore the most important thing you can do to prepare yourself for college and college admission is to earn the very best grades of which you are capable. While college admission committees are happy to see grades improve over time, poor grades, even in the early years, can hurt your candidacy at many institutions.

Do your homework and class work diligently. Records show that students who demonstrate a strong work ethic often have better grades than students who have higher standardized test scores but who may be lazy or procrastinate. Do all of your homework all of the time and turn in every assignment on time. The effort will show on your transcript.

CURRICULUM

Plan your curriculum choices well. Be sure that you and your faculty advisor have selected courses that will not only meet Heritage's graduation requirements but will follow the direction most appropriate for you based on your aptitudes, interests and aspirations. Selective colleges will expect five challenging academic courses every year in a progressive sequence. Other colleges may not make the same demands but all will question a student who obviously has chosen the easiest path.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Three primary characteristics that colleges seek in applicants are responsibility, reliability, and initiative. College admissions committees also look for examples of leadership, concern for others, integrity, creativity, independence, maturity and special talents. These qualities are frequently demonstrated through a student's involvement in activities outside the classroom.

Colleges want to see that you have taken full advantage of the available opportunities or made an opportunity where there was none. The choice of extracurricular activities should be based on personal interest. Remember that the number of activities is less significant than your depth of involvement. Colleges (especially small private colleges) are not necessarily looking for "well-rounded" individuals. Instead, many are trying to construct a well-rounded class of individuals with varied talents or interests. You may participate in only one extracurricular activity; if you commit yourself to it and distinguish yourself by making a significant contribution to that activity or program, you will stand out.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Begin performing and keeping track of community service hours. Find something that you enjoy and commit to it for an extended amount of time. Colleges like to see consistency in your volunteer work rather than sporadic interest.

TESTING

In October of tenth grade you will take the PSAT, a preliminary or practice college entrance test. The school will register you for the test. Your score will be sent only to our college counseling office and will not appear on your official transcript. The scores will become available in January.

SAT II exams are subject tests offered by the College Board that supplements the SAT I. Many selective colleges require one to three SAT II tests. They are most commonly taken in the junior and senior years. Be aware, however, that it may be appropriate to take certain SAT II tests such as Biology, Chemistry and American History following the successful completion of those courses in the 9th or 10th grades.

In summary:

Do not worry too much about college at this stage except for laying the foundation of a strong college application:

- 1. Be conscientious about your schoolwork and select your courses carefully.*
- 2. Demonstrate your character by becoming involved in meaningful outside activities.*

JUNIOR YEAR

I. COLLEGE EXPLORATION

Begin your junior year with an eye to the future. While going to college may still seem like ages away, now is the time to start exploring your options. Junior year is also the last full academic year that college admissions committees will see prior to making a decision about your qualifications. Admissions counselors will carefully review your accomplishments and activities in an effort to determine whether you have exhibited the characteristics necessary to be successful on their campuses.

GRADES

Continue to do your best in the classroom. Teachers will be expecting more of you, and the skills that you are mastering now are essential for success in college. **This year is the most important year on your transcript.**

CURRICULUM

Examine your academic schedule to be sure you are challenging yourself and achieving your goals. As you begin to look at colleges that interest you, compare your academic record with the specific admission requirements and freshman profiles at those institutions.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Seek increasing levels of responsibility and involvement in your activities outside the classroom.

TESTING

Review the results of the PSAT taken in October and schedule SAT I and/or ACT in May or June. Consult with your teachers and college counselor regarding ways to improve your scores. Take SAT II and AP exams as appropriate. (See page 10 for more information about testing.)

RESEARCH

Mount a serious information gathering campaign to develop a list of 15-30 colleges that may match your personal abilities, achievements, interests and educational objectives. Picking a college is an important decision, perhaps the most important one you have made so far. Although it may seem like a daunting task, if you take initiative and invest yourself in the process you will find many schools from which to choose. College guides, viewbooks and videos are excellent tools to initiate your research. Utilize the Internet. Attend college fairs and seminars offered to disseminate information about admissions and financial aid. Take advantage of visits by college representatives to Heritage. (See pages 8-10).

Plan visits to colleges on your interest list. Tour the campus, participate in information sessions, go to a class, and attend a campus event. Try to visit colleges when they are in session and students are on campus. Stay in a dorm and eat in the dining hall if permissible. Look around the city or community in which the college is located. Continue your campus visits in the summer and fall. (See page 9).

PARENTS' ROLE

Students, communicate regularly with your parents. Keep them informed about where your exploration is taking you and allow them to follow your progress and define ways in which they can be supportive of your efforts.

Parents, there are a number of things you can do to be helpful to your student.

First, it is important to explain the financial realities of the family and of financial aid and what limitations if any that may have on college selection. An early estimate of eligibility for financial aid and discussions regarding college expenses and the potential for indebtedness will help prevent disappointment later. Colleges make varying efforts to meet demonstrated financial need, and competition for merit-based scholarships can be very difficult.

Second, help your student remain focused on identifying colleges that will be a good match. Occasionally students become distracted by side issues such as where their friends are going and lose sight of what they are trying to find for themselves. Urge them to explore all the possibilities and to understand that there is more than one college that is "right" for him or her.

Third, help your student watch deadlines. A late application is the same as no application.

Fourth, support an ethical approach to the college admissions process. Students must complete their own applications, including the essay or personal statement.

Finally, understand that the student can be feeling a significant amount of stress during this process. Be encouraging and supportive, offering advice and guidance when appropriate.

THE FIRST STEP: GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

In preparation for undertaking the college search it is essential to perform an honest self-assessment. Take time to realistically examine your needs, likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.

1. **Complete a personal inventory.** Ask yourself such questions as:
 - What are your academic strengths?
 - What courses have you enjoyed the most?
 - What do you do well?
 - What interests you the most?
 - Do you enjoy reading on your own?
 - What forms of instruction (lecture, lab, discussion, group project) do you appreciate?
 - What type of environment is most conducive to your success?
 - What type of people would you like to meet?
 - Do you prefer to do things on your own or do you need guidance?
 - How engaged have you been in your studies?
 - How do you like to spend your free time?
 - Do you enjoy museums, the symphony, opera; or do you prefer hiking, canoeing, camping?
 - How important is the weather to you?
 - Are there any careers that interest you at this time?

Your answers to these questions will help you resolve a number of issues in selecting a college. There are two main aspects to the college selection: program and culture. Program refers to academic courses, majors, core curriculum, facilities, foreign study, arts, and athletics. Culture refers to the student lifestyle: number of students and where they are from, campus location, quality of food, recreational and social opportunities. Students have a tendency to focus on culture rather than on program because few high school students feel comfortable making study and career choices so early in their lives. However, by approaching the process systematically, program can rise to its level of primary importance in college selection.

2. **Develop a resume.** List all your activities both in and out of school. Include recognitions, honors, or leadership opportunities. It should provide a comprehensive picture of your achievements and talents.
3. **Compile your admission profile.** This includes course selections in grades 9-12, SAT and ACT scores, and GPA.

NEXT: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

From the following list, select the five items that are the most important to you in selecting a college:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Living in a different part of the country | 11. Attending a nationally renowned school |
| 2. Being exposed to new ideas | 12. Getting specific career training |
| 3. Having a more interesting social life | 13. Helping me get a good job |
| 4. Being near cultural activities | 14. Meeting people different from myself |
| 5. Getting practical experience in my tentative chosen field | 15. Studying abroad |
| 6. Preparing for a specific professional school (law, medicine, business, etc) | 16. Taking classes from renowned professors |
| 7. Getting a solid liberal arts education | 17. Developing my talents and interests |
| 8. Participating in athletic activities | 18. Participating in special academic programs |
| 9. Being challenged academically | 19. Being out on my own |
| 10. Competing with others on my own level | 20. Participating in extracurricular activities |

If you chose numbers 2, 3, 8, 17, or 19 – almost any college can offer you the opportunities you seek.

If numbers 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 20 were your choices – you will need to be more selective.

Numbers 6, 9, 11, and 16 will require that you consider a more highly competitive and academically prestigious college.

As part of your search process, consider which of these basic outcomes seems most important to you: 1) a liberal arts education, 2) career training, 3) a prestigious affiliation, or 4) a once in a lifetime experience. If a liberal arts education is your goal you will want to look at institutions where teaching is a high priority. These tend to be the small to medium size colleges. If your goal is specific career training you should focus your search less on general characteristics and more on the programs in your field of interest. Interest in a prestigious affiliation requires a careful matching of your admission profile with the requirements of more highly selective colleges. If your priority is that memorable college experience, you may need to look for a balance between work and extracurricular activities in the college's environment.

IDENTIFYING YOUR SELECTION CRITERIA

There are many factors to consider in compiling your college list. Comparisons can be made in a number of categories. The following list provides a valuable tool for discussion and evaluation as you make your selections.

- Campus atmosphere (friendly and relaxed, competitive, spirited)
- Distance from home
- Size (# of students)
- Campus location (urban, rural, suburban)
- Geographic region
- Cost (availability of financial aid, merit scholarship opportunities)
- Facilities (computer labs, recreational facilities, art studios)
- Housing (dorm-oriented, off-campus)
- Security
- Academic reputation (rankings, retention and graduation rates)
- Curriculum (liberal arts, flexible, pre-professional)
- Specific programs or majors
- Recognized strength in a specific department
- Average freshman class size
- Availability of professors
- Athletics (interscholastic, intramural)
- Social life (fraternities/sororities, outdoor activities, off-campus entertainment)
- Campus organizations (student government, clubs, service groups)
- Religious affiliation
- Fine arts (music, art, dance, theatre)

Use this list as you research different colleges to help you determine whether they will meet your requirements.

II. ADMISSION TO THE SERVICE ACADEMIES

The United States Air Force, Coast Guard, Military (Army), and Naval Academies offer a free education in return for a commitment of five or more years of active military service. Although similar to the most competitive colleges in expecting excellent grades and SAT scores their admissions process differs. All candidates for admission must receive a nomination from a legal authority. Students apply for nomination in the spring of junior year by writing to both of your state's U.S. Senators, your Congressional Representative, and the Vice-president of the United States. Beyond grades and test scores you will have to demonstrate your strength of character and leadership ability through your involvement in various activities. You will also have to pass a physical aptitude test and a medical examination. The acceptance rate of applicants to the service academies runs about 10-13%.

III. COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SELECTING COLLEGES

Don't fall into the following mental traps.

I can't pick a college because I don't know what I want to be.

More than three-quarters of all entering freshmen will change their major. The jobs that many of you will hold do not exist yet. It is great if you have a burning desire to be a doctor or an engineer, but you should not be concerned if you don't have a well-defined goal in mind. Instead, think about the types of things you like to study or do. What do you think might be an interesting subject or activity to pursue? Most colleges offer you a great variety of options and paths to explore. College is an experience that can literally open the world to you. You will examine areas and subjects that perhaps you never knew existed. It is likely that the opportunities you discover in college will help you make decisions about your future. That is what college is all about.

I can't tell which one college will be best for me.

Nor can anyone else. In all likelihood there are a dozen colleges that are excellent choices for you, but no one can tell you with any assurance that your experience at one will be any more or less rewarding than at another. The more that you can establish your needs and interests and research the colleges, the better you can narrow the field to that group that seems the best.

I want to go to college in the city, not out in the country.

Many students think that they need to be in or near a large city in order to have enough things to do. In fact, colleges offer entertainment that is aimed at college students, whereas cities often market their entertainment to more affluent adults. Those colleges that are the farthest from cities often take a greater responsibility for the social lives of students and, thus, the students are happier at those institutions. Consider the quality of life ratings by students at Colgate (92%), Colby (94%), Sewanee (94%), and Dartmouth (98%), all colleges considered to be in the boonies compared to Boston College (75%), NYU (78%), and the University of Southern California (76%) which are located in major metropolitan areas. This is not intended to be an argument for rural colleges or an argument against city colleges. If you are looking forward to an internship in a financial institution or you enjoy art museums and opera you may well prefer a city college. The intention is to encourage you to think carefully about what you want to do and to challenge some of your assumptions.

I can't go to a small college because I want to meet lots of different people.

How many people do you wish to know? Swarthmore in Pennsylvania has around 1400 students. Some students think that is too small. However, each incoming class brings in over 300 new faces onto campus each year, so a student would have the potential of knowing over 2200 people. Isn't that enough to provide lots of choice? And where do they come from? Swarthmore's students come from 48 states and 41 foreign countries. Twenty percent are non-Caucasian. Look carefully at a college's demographics; many of them have a widely diverse student population. Size alone does not ensure variety or opportunity for friendship.

I would never consider a girl's school!

Most of the students who attend a women's college (NOT a "girl's school" – there is a difference), did not choose to go there because it is single sex. Rather, they chose it for the quality of programs and quality of life. Being single sex is only one of many facets of a college. Consider the quality of life ratings at Wellesley (91%), Sweet Briar (96%), Hollins (99%), Mt. Holyoke (95%), and Smith (94%). The administrations of these colleges pay particular attention to the details of student life. In addition, many of the women's colleges have become very responsive to the marketplace and have demonstrated a willingness to be innovative in their curriculum to meet changing needs. Hollins College has a remarkable internship program for students to have hands-on experience in almost any field. The writing program at Wellesley is one of the best in the country. A significant percentage of women officers and directors of Fortune 1000 companies in this country, as well as female members of Congress, are graduates of women's colleges. Graduates of women's colleges are more than twice as likely to receive doctoral degrees as female graduates of coeducational institutions. Consider a single sex college for what it has to offer.

In order to be properly trained as a scientist I have to go to a large research university.

In a study conducted a few years ago, researchers discovered that small liberal arts colleges are the source of the majority of Ph.D. candidates in the sciences. The full reasons for this are unclear but it appears that the chances for doing undergraduate research with a professor at a small liberal arts college are greater than at a large university. It was also suggested that students attending these institutions might be more aggressive about their studies.

I do not want to go to college too far from home.

Expecting Mom to do your laundry every week? Unless you have special family considerations, coming home to visit family and friends every weekend will become less of a priority as you acclimate to the college environment and establish your independence. More importantly, if college is your opportunity to encounter a greater and wider world, searching in a larger radius is a good idea. Travel costs can be a concern; however, you may find that lower tuition costs in some states such as Texas, or greater financial aid available in Ohio may offset the increased cost of travel.

I want to go to a college that I have heard of.

Besides ending a sentence with a preposition, you are making a serious error: what is known as the ESPN choice. The greatest source of college names for most people is television sports, hardly a reliable basis for finding the schools that meet your selection criteria. You want to attend a college that will offer you the knowledge and skills necessary for success. Therefore, you need to be more concerned with a college's track record with graduate schools and career placement than with its track scores as reported on ESPN.

IV. WHERE TO LOOK FOR COLLEGE INFORMATION

College Guidebooks

This is usually a good place to *start* your investigation. There are many excellent guidebooks. Unfortunately, there is no one book that will supply you with all the information and answers you need to make an informed decision. Therefore, you will want to consult several different guidebooks before moving on to the next type of investigative resource. Guidebooks fall into several categories. Examples of comprehensive references are *The College Handbook* published by the College Board and Barron's *Profiles of American Colleges*. They contain all the factual data needed to answer your most basic questions about admission, curriculum and majors, location, size, cost and make up of the student body. They will not give you much feel for the atmosphere of the school.

Narrative, subjective guidebooks describe the academic and social atmosphere on individual college campuses, frequently based on surveys of currently enrolled students or on the observations of writers who have recently visited the campuses. Good examples of these references are *The Fisk Guide to Colleges* published by Times Books, *The Insider's Guide to Colleges* published by Yale Daily News, and *Colleges That Change Lives* written by Loren Pope.

Specific information references have a narrow focus and provide limited information that may be helpful in your investigation. These include *Index of Majors and Graduate Degrees* published by the College Board and the *Directory of Unusual Majors* published by The College Connection.

References for students with specific backgrounds, interests, concerns or talents provide information on topics that are very specific to a particular segment of the population and are not designed to be utilized by everyone. A sample of the wide variety of references from this category includes *The Black Student's Guide to Colleges* published by Beckham House Publishers, *Choose a Christian College*, published by Christian College Connection, *Directory of Catholic Colleges and Universities*, published by The College Connection, and *The Winning Edge: The Student-Athlete's Guide to College Sports* published by Octameron Associates.

A number of the above-mentioned references are available for your use in the College Counseling Center, as are a collection of college catalogs, viewbooks, videos, and DVDs.

College Viewbooks, Catalogs, Videos and DVDs

The viewbook, while largely an advertisement for the college, can portray a feel for what the campus looks like and what the school deems most important about itself. The catalog, on the other hand, has an excellent in-depth description of courses and programs, major and curriculum requirements, student life, expenses and financial aid, rules and regulations. A college's catalog may be available on-line. Videos or DVDs can provide you with a more 3-dimensional view of the campus and student life. Spend some time in the College Counseling Center looking through our many resources.

College Web Sites

Although they vary in scope and level of sophistication, most colleges have their own web sites. These are outstanding sources of information. Exploring a college's web site can provide a very realistic and wide-ranging view of the institution. Admissions offices, in particular, utilize the web sites to provide information to prospective students and many enable you to request information and applications via e-mail.

After you check out the admissions page of a college's web site, visit the home pages of the academic departments, in which you are interested, or the athletic department, or various student organizations. You may find the student newspaper on-line. Some colleges even provide links to the home pages of current students or provide e-mail listings of faculty and students.

Many colleges also have BLOGS written by students and/or admissions departments. They are a great way to find out interesting information about the school, student life, and the admissions process.

People to People Resources

Your college counselor is there to assist you through the process. You can meet with her regularly. College admissions officers, whom you may meet on a college visit or at a college fair, are good people to ask specific questions about a college. They will most likely know both our school and theirs and can provide a reasonable assessment of admission possibilities. However, recent alumni from The Heritage School are also a valuable source of information. Having experienced both environments recently, they can often provide helpful insights.

College Fairs and Admissions Representatives Visits

In September of your junior and senior years you will attend a college fair at The Lovett School. Admissions representatives from colleges across the country participate, bringing viewbooks, catalogs and applications for their colleges. They are available to answer any questions you have about their colleges. During the course of the event many of them will conduct formal information sessions to provide an opportunity for more in depth discussion.

Admissions representatives will also visit Heritage in the fall months. These visits are valuable opportunities to learn first hand about the admissions process in general as well as to gather information about specific schools. You are encouraged to utilize the visits of college admissions representatives even if you don't think you are interested in the colleges they represent. The more you learn the easier the process will be.

HOW TO ORGANIZE INCOMING INFORMATION

You will receive a lot of information from colleges, both solicited and unsolicited. Some will interest you, some will not. Try to look at everything to make sure you do not overlook a school that you might not have thought about. Set up a separate, clearly marked folder for each college that interests you. Do not throw anything away until you are positive you will not be applying there (like at the end of your senior year!). Mark important dates on the outside of each folder or on an application checklist. Divide your files into the following categories: *Very Interested, Maybe Interested, Not Interested*. For the schools in which you are interested, be sure that you take note of testing and interview requirements.

DEVELOPING THE EXPLORATION LIST

All of the preceding activities are intended to facilitate the development of a list of 15-30 colleges for further exploration. What a wonderful adventure! And like most adventures it can be simultaneously exhilarating and terrifying. It is a time of introspection for both student and parent and can seem like a daunting task. Your goal is to develop your list of schools that meet the broadest range of your selection criteria and have it in place by the end of junior year. To assist in this process, you and your parents will attend a College Admission Seminar (for Parents) and Workshop (for students) in March conducted by admissions representatives invited to Heritage to help demystify college admissions for you. In addition, during the spring individual conferences are held to discuss your college selection criteria, academic profile, appropriate college entrance testing, scheduling for senior year and possible colleges to explore.

COLLEGE VISITS

Visiting a college's campus will give you a better idea about their facilities, faculty, educational offerings, student body and general atmosphere than any other source. Make an effort to visit as many colleges on your list as you can with an eye towards the six or so to which you will be applying. Just as you should not apply to a school that you would not want to attend, you should also not apply to a school that you have not visited. Of course, sometimes distance can be an impediment to making a visit, but you should understand the risk involved. Many a student has been accepted to a college they were unable to visit and when they walked onto the campus immediately knew they were in the wrong place.

Tips for campus visits

Read the material sent by each college. Use it as a resource to enable you to ask informed questions of the admissions staff. Keep in mind that you are interviewing the college as much as it is interviewing you. Do not be afraid to ask probing questions, but at the same time remember that you describe yourself by the questions you ask. Be thoughtful and articulate.

Never schedule visits to more than two schools in one day. Allow 2-3 hours for each school as well as time for travel between them. It is nice to have time to look around on your own.

Call in advance to schedule your appointment. Individual interviews have become rare in college admissions. More commonly, admissions staff conducts group information sessions on a pre-established schedule, combined with student-led campus tours. Depending on the college, you may or may not need a reservation for one or the other. So be sure to call (or e-mail) ahead to determine each college's policy. In addition, consider whether you want to take the opportunity to arrange meetings with coaches, department heads, professors, or friends attending the school.

Visit while college is in session. It is difficult to get a sense of the student body and campus atmosphere when students are not around. If you use the summer for your initial visits you can plan to revisit the campuses after you have been accepted.

Note the name of the admissions officer you meet. You should direct future phone calls and correspondence to him or her. (Remember to write a thank you note.) Also, always make sure the school makes a record of your visit even if you have only stopped by to pick up materials. Some schools, Emory University for example, pay special attention to what they call "demonstrated interest" on the part of applicants. This is measured by the number of visits to their campus whether to the admissions office or cultural or athletic or other events.

Once you are there: Visit the library and note its size and accessibility. What are its hours? Can you access the card catalog from a computer in your room? Do they have an inter-library loan system? Visit the dorms, athletic facilities, classrooms and student center. Are the facilities up-to-date? If you have a special interest such as fine arts look at those facilities. Read bulletin boards and the student newspaper to get a sense of what is happening on campus. Have a snack in the cafeteria or student union and listen to the conversations around you. Check out the area surrounding the campus. Is there campus security?

V. TESTING

PSAT. The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is administered on campus in October to our sophomores and juniors. It is a multiple choice test scored on a scale of 20-80 that measures writing, verbal and mathematical abilities developed by the student over time. PSAT scores are used for early and better-informed college guidance. In addition, the National Merit Program uses the scores from junior year for awarding recognition and scholarships. PSAT scores do not appear on your transcript.

SAT I. Since so many students apply to each college from so many different high schools with different grading systems and expectations, colleges use standardized testing in an effort to create a standardized tool to evaluate students. While grades and courses are the most important criteria used, test scores are utilized to varying degrees. The SAT given by the College Board is used as a predictor of a student's ability to successfully do college work and is now divided into three sections, critical reading, math, and writing. The lowest score one can receive on a section is 200; the highest is 800. A score of 500 is considered average. The "New SAT", which was first administered in March 2005, added the additional writing portion of the test as well as making changes to the reading and math sections. The total score is now out of a possible 2400 instead of the 1600 from past years. To see an approximate comparison of the New SAT to the former SAT and the ACT see Appendix (p. 26).

The SAT is commonly taken beginning in January of the junior year and may continue through fall of the senior year. Registration and information materials for the current year are in the College Counseling center. The school does not register you for the SAT. If you prefer, you may register online at www.collegeboard.com. Deadlines are 5-6 weeks prior to the test (p. 26). Walk-in test day registration may be available for an additional fee on a first-come first-served basis, but is limited to remaining space and test booklets after registered candidates have been seated. If you anticipate taking the SAT three times, the first time should be in January or March of junior year. However, for most students two sittings are adequate. Studies of scores reveal that fewer than 5% of students improve their scores on either the math or verbal sections by taking the SAT more than twice. The test dates in May and June of junior year are most appropriate for the first sitting for most students, or can serve as the second sitting for those who chose to take the SAT earlier. **Remember to enter Heritage's school code I12243 on your registration so that your scores can be sent to the school.**

SAT II. This test is also given by the College Board and closely resembles what formerly were called Achievement Tests. These one-hour tests are given in specific subject areas such as Writing, Math, American History, Chemistry, and others. (See the SAT II test booklet available in the College Counseling Center for specific subjects offered.) A maximum of three tests may be taken on any one date. The scoring system is the same as the SAT I. These tests are taken generally in the spring of junior year. Not every college requires them for admission. Some use them for course placement after admission. As well some colleges give advanced placement credit for a high score in a particular subject. You must research the colleges in which you are interested to determine their requirements. As a rule, you should plan on taking the Writing and Math IIC tests at the end of junior year or early in senior year. You may also wish to consider taking one other subject, such as Biology or French.

ACT. The American College Test or ACT is accepted by most colleges in lieu of the SAT. Sections include English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning, with the different parts producing individual sub-scores in addition to the composite score. The sub-tests are achievement-oriented and curriculum-based. The ACT is an excellent alternative for students who perform well academically but do not score well on the SAT. In February of 2005 an optional essay was added to the ACT. Some schools will require this so check before taking it. The ACT uses a low score of 1 to a high of 36 in scoring each sub-test. The composite score is the average of the four subjects. An SAT to ACT score comparison table is included in the Appendix.

TEST PREPARATION

You may wonder whether you should take an SAT prep course. Given the significant role that test scores play in the admissions process, many students (or their parents!) seek ways to maximize their scores. The value of SAT prep courses has been debated for years. Reputable studies have shown that commercial courses such as Kaplan and Princeton Review raise scores only minimally for a lot of money. Less expensive alternatives are offered through local high schools or continuing education departments. Should you take one? Some people can prepare well on their own with written materials or a computer program. Others require the structure and guidance offered by a class. Either approach can familiarize you with the test and increase your confidence. You should know that in most cases students' scores will improve during the course of the testing process whether or not they take a prep course. The quantitative and verbal skills that are measured have developed over a period of time and there are no quick fixes or easy methods that will have a significant impact on scores. Test coaching is not a substitute for knowledge, but it can reduce anxiety, provide review, and help students improve their test-taking skills.

Improving reading skills in the short term is very difficult to do. An exercise that may be helpful is to read several articles in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, or *The Washington Post* (chosen for their complexity of topics, vocabulary, and expected reading level) and explain those articles to someone else. Do this exercise every day for six weeks and you will likely see an improvement in your reading and comprehension skills (as well as a dramatic improvement in the level of discussion at the dinner table). Also, *Thirty Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary* and Princeton Review's *Word Smart II* help develop vocabulary for college entrance tests.

The math section of the SAT is restricted to algebra and geometry skills. It is a good idea to brush up on these skills before taking the test. Utilizing a source such as *The Comprehensive Guide to the New SAT* published by the College Board will provide the appropriate review as well as increase familiarity with the format of the test.

VI. SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Colleges do not have specific expectations regarding summer activities other than for a student to be active. Admissions representatives understand that not everyone can afford the opportunity to explore Europe, travel across the United States, or study at Duke for the summer. Many students work in the summer. Some may have to help the family by caring for younger siblings while parents work. Colleges generally find all these activities to be of value. The key is to make the most of the circumstances in which you find yourself. Demonstrate your initiative and creativity. If you babysat your little brother, did you take the opportunity to teach him Spanish or some other skill that you could share? If you worked at Chik-Fil-A, were you recognized for your dedication and reliability? Would your employer be a good source for a personal recommendation?

VII. OVERVIEW OF JUNIOR YEAR

Goals

- Perform self-evaluation.
- Identify college selection criteria.
- Develop exploration list of 15-20 colleges.
- Research college list.
- Begin college visits.
- Begin work on resume and college essay.
- Take SAT I, SAT II, ACT.

College Bound Programs

- College Fair: September
- College Visitation Trip: October
- Financial Aid Presentation: November
- College Admissions Program: March.
- Monday Morning Meetings
- Junior Conferences: March

SENIOR YEAR

I. COLLEGE SELECTION AND ADMISSION

By now, most of your work should be done. You have undertaken an effective exploration campaign and know far more about the colleges you are considering and the educational opportunities they present. Along the way some new colleges were added to the list. Some were eliminated.

NARROWING THE CHOICES

By November, your exploration list should be pared down to the 5 or 6 colleges to which you will apply based upon your selection criteria and research. Review your refined list with regard for those features that you deem most important. Your objective is not to find a single college but, rather, the group of colleges that meet your selection criteria. Avoid focusing on a “first choice”. If you have done your homework, all your selections should be colleges you feel are a good fit for you. In other words, remember that there is no solitary “right” college; there will be a choice among several “right” colleges. You may indeed have a favorite or two, but all the schools to which you apply should be colleges that you would attend if offered admission.

Your final list should include at least one or two institutions to which you expect to be admitted. It should contain at least one or two colleges where you have a good chance of acceptance. And your list should have at least one college for which admission is a reach for you depending on the level of competition. In general, a reasonable “reach” school is one where everything must work perfectly in order for the student to gain admission. The student has about a 10-30% chance of being accepted. In truth, fewer than a hundred schools out of the more than 3600 institutions nationally can report that they have acceptance rates below 50%. However, in this era of the “baby boomlet,” economic prosperity and multiple applications, colleges are receiving record numbers of applications from which to choose their freshman classes. This is creating lower acceptance rates and higher admission standards at many formerly accessible institutions, a trend that is expected to continue for the next ten years.

II. COUNSELING PHILOSOPHY

Our focus is on assisting students to find the best match for their talents, personality and interests. Pursuing the most selective school to which a student can be accepted is a goal only if the individual student has identified that in his or her selection criteria. That does not mean we do not encourage students to stretch to their highest potential. Often Heritage students will have aspirations that will take them beyond the undergraduate level. In these cases it is important to identify the institutions that will do the best job of preparing students to succeed in achieving their long term goals and where the student’s record will enable him or her to stand out.

What can you expect of your college counselor?

- The college counselor will be accessible to students and parents. She will guide, advise, facilitate and encourage students. She will not tell them where they should apply or where they should enroll.
- The college counselor will provide information resources for students and parents as part of the College Bound Program of The Heritage School. This includes information on scholarship opportunities and financial aid.
- The college counselor will write a comprehensive, honest, and descriptive recommendation to submit to the colleges on behalf of The Heritage School based on data from teachers, coaches, parents, students and by personal observation.
- The college counselor does not get students admitted to colleges nor does she keep them out. The student determines that outcome. The college counselor’s experience and advice is expected to help students present themselves in the best possible manner thus making them more attractive to their colleges of choice.
- The college counselor will send a neat, professional, personalized, and comprehensive application packet to the colleges. The packet typically contains:
 1. Completed application and fee (if not completed online) with transcript and test scores
 2. Student’s Resume of awards and activities
 3. The Heritage School Profile and Secondary School Report
 4. Counselor and Teacher Recommendations (as required)
 5. Cover letter

III. EARLY DECISION, EARLY ACTION, EARLY NOTIFICATION, REGULAR DECISION

What's the difference?

Colleges offer a variety of options for your consideration in making application for admission. If there is a school that is clearly your first choice and you are willing to forego other admission opportunities, then you may decide to pursue an Early Decision application to that college.

Early Decision. This application process has an early application deadline, typically November 1. The college will notify you of their decision no later than December 20. In most cases, submission of an Early Decision application is a binding obligation to attend if admitted. By applying Early Decision you have indicated that you will matriculate at that institution if admitted, have not applied at another institution under Early Decision, and will withdraw all other pending applications upon receipt of your acceptance. The perceived advantages of applying under Early Decision are: 1) More colleges appear to be taking larger portions of their freshman class from the Early Decision pool, and 2) It's all over by Christmas. No more applications to complete. No waiting 'til April for notification. Just relax and enjoy the rest of the year. The major disadvantage is that you are locked into a single choice and if your feelings change during second semester you have no other options. Perhaps you didn't give it as much thought and investigation as you should have, allowing yourself to be seduced by perceived advantages of making an Early Decision application. You should apply under this plan only if you are totally committed. In addition, in most cases, you should not apply Early Decision if you will be relying on financial aid.

Early Action. This process also has an early application deadline, normally early November. Without requiring a commitment on your part, the college will notify you of their decision by December 20. They can admit you, defer you to the regular admission pool, or occasionally deny you admission.

Early Notification. This is a catch-all term for the other varieties of notifying students prior to April 1. Some colleges will reply as quickly as four to six weeks after receiving your application. This is also referred to as "Rolling Admissions". Colleges may have a series of deadlines for these applications. Many of the large public institutions utilize this procedure to facilitate the handling of large numbers of applications. Under this system it is most advantageous to submit your application as early as possible.

Regular Decision. This is the traditional application procedure and is utilized by many small to medium size institutions. Deadlines for applications are usually in January or February and notifications are sent by April 1.

Please read each college's application materials carefully to know which plans are offered. In general, by applying early a student indicates an avid interest in that institution. At some colleges when a student is deferred in Early Decision or Early Action to the Regular Decision round, he will have a slight advantage over similar students who did not apply early. Most state institutions have unwritten deadlines for out-of-state students as well as higher admission standards and limits on the number they may admit. If you intend to apply to a public out-of-state institution such as Auburn or the Clemson or to any school with rolling admissions do not wait until their published deadlines to send your application.

IV. THE APPLICATION

College applications are in a period of transition. A number of private colleges use the Common Application, a generic form designed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. It is available in paper form and online at <http://commonapp.org>. In addition, many colleges now offer their applications in electronic and/or downloadable forms. The ultimate choice of how to complete and send in an application is the student's. To complete a traditional paper application provided by the colleges use black ink and your neatest handwriting, utilizing a typewriter or printer for your essay only. If an essay is required and/or a list of activities (i.e., resume), it may be acceptable for you to put those on separate sheets and attach them to the application.

Make a copy of the blank application first so that you will have a practice form. Double-check everything. Failing to check a box, include the application fee, or sign the application may result in delaying your application. Unless you prefer to send in your application yourself, bring it to the counseling office to be sent from the school as part of a complete packet including your transcript and secondary school report at least two weeks before your mailing deadline. Be sure to provide to the counseling office an Application Checklist (See Appendix) for each application submitted so that we can verify the status of each application and the appropriate deadlines. You are required by The Heritage School to submit at least one application to the counseling office by November 1.

Your signature on the Authorization to Release Records and Student Waiver of Access form at the beginning of senior year enables us to send transcripts, secondary school reports and recommendations to the colleges. The secondary school report consists of the school Profile describing the school and the graduating class as well as a student evaluation. The counselor recommendation is included as required by individual colleges. These items are confidential and are not shared with students or parents. Confidentiality lends greater credence to our letters of recommendation.

V. COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FACTORS

The first and foremost talent that colleges seek is academic. With most colleges (and there are exceptions) grades are the first things they examine. Colleges want to see good grades and challenging classes. A student with good grades and poor SAT scores has a better chance of gaining admission to a selective college than a student with poor grades and good SAT scores. However, admissions to college are not always reflective of the merit of the candidate. Colleges are seeking students that meet the college's criteria for making a freshman class or some need of the college community; they are not in the business for our benefit only and sometimes the decisions they make may not seem fair or right. If you can accept this, the college admission process will be a lot less painful.

There are many different processes used to evaluate candidates. Some are simple. At many of the large public institutions the volume of applications prohibits individual consideration of each applicant. Your SAT score and GPA may be inserted into a formula that determines the admission decision. This is the case at schools like Auburn University. Also, it is common for state colleges and universities to have higher admission standards for non-residents than for residents of their own states. The smaller the college, the more intricate and intimate is the process. Some of the most selective institutions such as Swarthmore and Princeton still utilize an interview even if it is with an alumnus who lives in the area. In general, the more selective liberal arts institutions follow a similar pattern: a candidate's packet is evaluated for courses, grades, and test scores. The file then goes to one or more readers who evaluate the other parts of the application, particularly personal characteristics (extracurricular activities and personal statement) and recommendations. The admission decision may be made at this point. The full Admissions Committee reviews the decisions and rules on the remaining candidates presented by the reader. Therefore, capturing the attention of the reader is critical to a successful candidacy. The quality of your activities and your essay are what distinguish you from the pack.

Be aware of your own personal statistics. Know your test scores and your GPA. Learn which entrance tests, curriculum, and GPA each school requires. What percentage of applicants is accepted? What does the academic profile of the middle 50% of the accepted students look like? Make a reasonable assessment of your chances for acceptance. It is important to be honest with yourself when making this assessment. The more realistic you are the better your chances of being successful with your applications.

UPPER SCHOOL RECORD AND STRENGTH OF PROGRAM

The first thing many admissions officers look for is either consistency or growth in the student's Upper School record. They prefer to see a consistently strong performance or an upward trend even as courses become more challenging during the junior and senior years. Grades are the most obvious indicator of success within the context of a student's academic record. Colleges also want to see students appropriately challenge themselves, taking optional courses in subject areas like math and writing or Advanced Placement courses when appropriate. Finally, it is important to note if a student has won any academic awards, honors, or contests.

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING

The SAT I or ACT score is really the only uniform statistic that admissions officers can use to compare students from high schools all over the country. Although a growing number of colleges are downplaying the role of college admission testing it remains an inescapable part of the admission process. Typically the senior will take the SAT I and/or ACT one final time in the fall. Scores will automatically be sent to the colleges you designate on your test registration form. The Heritage School's CEEB Code is I12243 and must also be entered on the registration form.

RECOMMENDATIONS

College recommendations usually come from one or more of the following: the school recommendation written by the college counselor, teacher recommendations, and personal or peer recommendations. The value of recommendation letters is a hotly debated topic among college admission professionals. It is generally accepted that letters of recommendation may not have significant impact on the candidacy of an exceptional candidate but could tip the scales in favor of a candidate who is on the edge of the applicant pool for that institution.

Teacher recommendations provide the colleges with insights about your intellectual self. They will describe your work habits, your academic interests, and your idiosyncrasies. Each college will have its own particular requirements. Some ask for two teacher recommendations, sometimes requesting that your junior or senior English teacher write one. A number of institutions, particularly the large state universities, do not require teacher recommendations. Be sure to read the instructions for each application carefully. Give some thought to which teacher(s) you will select to write the letters. Ask the teacher directly if he or she will write a recommendation for you. If a teacher declines, do not feel slighted; he may simply not feel he knows you well enough to write a full and convincing letter.

You must request a teacher recommendation at least **two weeks** before your completed application is due in the counseling office. **However, you would be wise to make all your requests prior to October 15.** Teachers have every right to refuse your request if you do not give them adequate advance notice. As much as possible, give your recommenders your full list of colleges at the time of your request and any information you would like them to include or emphasize. Use the College Application Checklist to keep track of whom you asked and when you asked them.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Involvement outside the classroom is often what distinguishes one candidate from another in the applicant pool. Extracurricular activities are usually a statement about your personal qualities as well as your interests. They often speak to the applicant's character. When making these choices, keep in mind that college admissions counselors would rather see a student involve himself deeply in a few areas of interest year after year than spread himself all over the map. If you are a member of the Spanish Club, what have you done to make it better? If you only attended meetings, then the college may assume that your membership in that club is simply resume-packing and will either ignore it or hold it against you. Your activities should say something about your interests and beliefs. No one club or sport is more important than another. Extracurricular involvement includes such activities as school clubs, organizations, sports, academic teams, community service, religious groups, special talents or employment.

ATHLETICS

For most students athletic involvement only influences admissions by way of describing character. Participation on an athletic team helps describe your characteristics of dedication, loyalty, and determination. A student who puts in the extra time simply to make the team may impress an admissions officer more than the student who is a starter because of natural ability.

Any student intending to play intercollegiate sports in college must place a transcript on file with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Forms are available through the college counseling office. The recruitment of athletes is a tricky business. Two principles that a student should keep in mind about recruiting at any level are, 1) the coach, not the college, does the recruiting, and, 2) the college, not the coach, makes the admission decision. Be wary of any promises made by a coach regarding admissions. Please see pages 28 & 29 for more information about NCAA Eligibility.

THE ESSAY OR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Almost all private colleges and a few public colleges request an essay or personal statement from the candidate. While questions will often differ, the essence is an autobiographical statement. This statement is your opportunity to take charge of the process and personalize a very number-oriented process. Up to this point you may have been reduced to a number, an academic index created by a mathematical formula. Now you can tell them who you are and what you are about. You have to be willing to talk about yourself with compelling intimacy. You need to be able to tell a story that lets them know the things you believe and that are important to you. Do not try to tell them the things you think they want to hear. Do not write about negative issues such as death and car crashes. Give a great deal of thought to your essay and write about what you know.

One of the essay questions found on many applications including the common Application is, “Describe a significant event in your life.” Many students confuse the term “significant” to mean culturally significant, things that would be considered important in our culture such as deaths, awards, births, crime, and elections. That is not what this question is asking you. The term significant here means what is important to you personally. There is no right or wrong answer. There is only your answer. The quality of your answer is dependent upon your ability to express that answer honestly and uniquely. Admissions officers will evaluate how well you communicate (your writing ability), how creative you are, and what your essay reveals about yourself. Draw upon your personality to shape your response. If you tend to be a humorous person, tell them a humorous story with an important message. Tell them something about yourself that you have never told anyone. Let your values and beliefs be revealed anecdotally. Grammar and spelling do count, so proofread your essay carefully and ask someone else to proofread it also. You will attend an Essay Writing Workshop at Heritage in September conducted by an admissions counselor from a college in the Atlanta area. This is an opportunity to get hands-on feedback on your essay.

THE INTERVIEW

Because of the large numbers of applications received by many colleges and universities, a personal interview is no longer required or even feasible. Colleges who do utilize an interview in the admission process increasingly rely on local alumni to conduct the interviews. The purpose of the interview is to allow a member of the school community to become personally acquainted with you, make some judgments about you, and offer you the opportunity to ask questions. It is the least important of the application procedures and will rarely make a difference in the acceptance decision. However, it is to your advantage to be well prepared and make a good impression.

First, know about the college. Do not ask questions to which you should already know the answers. Second, review and clarify to yourself why you are applying to that college. They will most likely ask you that question and the more specific response will receive the higher evaluation. Third, answer each question fully. Do not simply respond yes or no. Anticipate the follow-up question. Explain why you have answered a certain way. Fourth, be cognizant of current events. They could very well ask you how you would solve a current issue or situation. Fifth, dress conservatively, not elegantly. A suit is not usually appropriate. Sixth, relax. Try to imagine meeting these people in a social situation. How would you talk to them then? They want to like you. Let them.

VI. ADMISSION DECISIONS

Hopefully, the response letters you receive will say “Congratulations!” And in past years Heritage students have had acceptance rates ranging from 70% to 90%. That means, however, that 10% or more of the responses have been denials. Do not perceive a college’s decision, any decision, as a definitive statement of your worth. To be refused admission simply means that the college does not have enough dormitory or classroom space to handle all the qualified students who applied for admission. Do not be despondent over receiving a denial. It happens to the best of students. Put it behind you and concentrate on choosing one of the colleges that has accepted you.

The majority of admissions decisions are made only after colleges look at your first semester grades. Many want to see your third quarter grades. Except for early decision/early action programs and rolling admissions, most colleges will mail their response letters in March. Generally speaking, the more selective the school the later their response date. Keep your counselor informed of each response as it arrives and provide a copy of the notification letter.

National Candidate Reply Date

You must reply to every college that has offered you admission. You cannot be required by a college to make a commitment prior to **May 1**, the National Candidate Reply Date endorsed by NACAC. For those colleges that you have decided not to attend, write a brief and polite letter stating your intentions for the coming year. To be assured of admission, you must notify the college you plan to attend no later than May 1. You may not accept admission to more than one college. Colleges occasionally cross-reference and may discover if you do. The Heritage School will send a final transcript to only one college for each student. To do otherwise is unethical. However, you may find at some large institutions that you will be asked to make a housing deposit prior to May 1 in order to be assured of limited on-campus housing. Ethical practice dictates that the deposit be refundable until May 1.

Making the Choice

How will you know which choice is the right one? Trust your instincts. Selecting a college may be one of the first major decisions that you have had to make. It is obviously important for you to make an informed decision. You will find, however, that your ultimate choice will be partly emotional, based on a feeling of where you will fit in best and be most happy for the next four years. Even among colleges that are similar in size, quality, and academic offerings, each is unique in atmosphere, student make-up and general feel. In the final analysis, one college will most likely “feel right” to you. You will easily be able to imagine yourself being a student there.

Wait-listing

Occasionally a college will tell you that they have put you on their “wait-list”. Colleges use this device to ensure they fill all their beds. To fill a freshman class of 1200 students, a college may actually offer acceptances to as many as 2400-3600 applicants. While college admissions committees make decisions about who they will admit, candidates must also decide where they are going. A college’s “yield” (the number of students who actually enroll compared to the number of students accepted) can vary considerably depending on many circumstances. A higher yield than predicted can result in overcrowded freshman dorms. A lower yield than expected means empty beds and less income from tuition than anticipated for that college. To deal with this guessing game, admissions committees will put some students on a wait-list hoping to add them to the class at a later date. How many candidates any college will take from their wait-list varies each year with each college. This can be a cruel game as the chances of getting in off the wait-list are generally slim. What the wait-list really means to you is if you are truly interested in that college, the situation remains fluid.

Entering college from a wait-list should not be a major issue to any student. If the college selection process has been done correctly and realistically, you have already been accepted by at least one college that will be great for you. Start getting excited about attending one of the colleges that has accepted you! The next four years are going to be terrific.

VII. FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Financial aid is the most complicated part of college selection. Applications for financial aid are handled through the financial aid offices at the colleges to which you apply. You will need to contact the offices at each college to ask what they require in the way of applications and documents. If you are uncertain about whether you will qualify for financial aid, an excellent source of information, including need-analysis is www.finaid.org. The College Bound Program includes a financial aid presentation in December of each year for interested parents.

Most colleges will generally refer to need-based aid as financial aid. Merit-based scholarships, in terms of the total amount of money available to students, make up a small percentage of awards. Merit-based scholarship winners generally make up the top 5% of an entering class. These scholarships are generated by the institutions in order to attract bright students. The most highly selective institutions such as the Ivy League schools do not offer merit scholarships but instead emphasize meeting a student’s financial need. In addition to colleges and universities, financial aid whether need-based or merit-based can come from many other sources including federal, state, and local governments, businesses and foundations, and community groups.

Sources and Types of Financial Aid

Essentially, there are two types of financial aid: gift aid and self-help aid. **Gift aid** is financial assistance that does not need to be repaid. There are three common forms of gift aid:

1. Grants are awarded on the basis of demonstrated financial need. **Pell Grants** make up the federal government’s largest gift program. They are the foundation of student aid, the bottom layer of the financial aid package. The amount of a Pell Grant varies with your expected family contribution (EFC), the cost of education at your school, and your student status. You apply for a Pell grant by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Be sure you do this as most colleges and states expect you to do so and will not consider you for other awards until they know your Pell status. Another federal program based on need is the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG).
2. Institutional scholarships are generally awarded based on academic merit or special talents, although sometimes need is taken into consideration. Scholarships provide funds toward tuition, fees, and other required educational expenses but not usually for living expenses. Georgia’s **HOPE Scholarship** (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) rewards students’ hard work with financial assistance in degree, diploma, or certificate programs at any eligible

Georgia public or private college or university or public technical college. The Hope Scholarship pays tuition and mandatory fees at Georgia's public institutions, and provides \$3,000 per academic year to students attending a private college or university in the state. (For full-time students in private colleges there is an additional \$1,045 Tuition Equalization Grant.) To qualify for the Hope you must be a legal resident of Georgia, be a 1993 or later graduate of an eligible high school meeting the curriculum requirements in its program of study, and maintain a "B" average in core courses. Log on to www.gacollege411.org for information on Georgia's HOPE Scholarship Program.

Non-institutional or community-based scholarships are those offered by civic organizations, businesses, and other local, state or national organizations. These are generally competitive, merit-based scholarships. However, some include financial need in their eligibility criteria. The college counseling office has applications available for a number of local scholarship opportunities. You are encouraged to look through the scholarship notebook in the college counseling office to find programs for which you would be eligible to apply. Others can be found through various web-based sites such as www.fastweb.com. Some employers sponsor scholarships for the children of employees. With imagination and perseverance it is possible to find many seemingly obscure sources of financial assistance.

3. Fellowships are awarded to graduate level students based on the applicant's academic merit. Most fellowships provide a stipend for living expenses in addition to educational expenses. Some forms of gift aid, such as **ROTC** scholarships and certain medical fellowships require some years of service in exchange for the financial aid. ROTC scholarships are available at hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States by the Army, Air Force and Navy. Application information is available in the counseling office. These scholarships are very competitive.

Self-help aid consists of loans and employment opportunities:

1. Loans are generally repaid with interest. Some loans do not have to be repaid until the student has graduated or otherwise left school. *Loans represent more than half of all financial aid.* The federal government now runs two parallel student loan programs: Federal Family Education Loans made by commercial lenders (subsidized Staffords, unsubsidized Staffords, and PLUS loans), and Federal Direct Student Loans made by the federal government (Direct subsidized Staffords, Direct unsubsidized Staffords, and Direct PLUS loans). You cannot borrow under both. Your college will tell you which program it prefers.

Stafford Loans, formerly called Guaranteed Student Loans, are low-interest loans to students enrolled at least halftime. Students with financial need may receive a **subsidized Stafford** in which the federal government pays the interest while the students are in school and during any deferments. Students without financial need may receive an **unsubsidized Stafford** in which interest accrues while in school and during deferments. There are annual loan limits as well as a maximum undergraduate amount. In no case may a Stafford Loan exceed the cost of attendance at your school minus any other financial aid received.

PLUS Loans are not based on financial need so you may use them to cover your expected family contribution. Credit-worthy parents can borrow an amount equal to the total cost of attendance less any aid received. Repayment begins within 60 days of taking out the loan and extends from 5-10 years. Repayment can be deferred while the student is in school; interest, however, continues to accrue.

Perkins Loans use funds provided by the federal government but loaned by the college. The criteria for selection include need and availability of funds. Students pay no interest while in school or during a 9-month grace period following graduation. Repayment occurs over 10 years.

2. Student employment may be part of a financial aid package offered by the college. Federal and state **work-study** programs offer part-time employment during the academic year. The work is often limited to less than 10 hours per week. The government pays part of the salary. Teaching and research **assistantships** normally provide graduate students with a full or partial tuition waiver and a small stipend in exchange for teaching and/or research duties.

Applying for Financial Aid

Applying for federal financial aid is relatively easy. Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**) and mail it to the address listed on the form. You can obtain the FAFSA form from the college counseling office, the college you plan to attend, or the Federal Student Aid Information Center. If you have Internet access, you may submit the FAFSA on the Web by accessing www.fafsa.ed.gov. You will need the following information to complete the FAFSA:

1. Most recent federal tax return with all pertinent schedules
2. W-2 forms and any 1099s
3. Records of untaxed income
4. Current bank statements
5. Brokerage statements showing value of investments
6. Mortgage statement
7. If self-employed: records of income and IRS-deductible expenses
8. For business and farm owners: financial statements or corporate tax return
9. Any other investment statements and records
10. Records of child support paid or received
11. Student's social security number and driver's license

The resultant need analysis yield a figure called the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) and is reported on the Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR is sent electronically to your college financial aid office and you will receive a copy in the mail. As a general rule, the formula for determining the amount of financial aid for which you are eligible is: the estimated cost of attending your college minus the EFC equals the amount of financial aid. Keep in mind two things: 1) few colleges guarantee to meet your total demonstrated financial need, and 2) your financial aid will be packaged as a combination of grants, loans and work-study. That is, there will likely be a "gap" between the amount offered and the amount of demonstrated need. In addition, comparison of financial aid packages from different schools can be confusing due to the differences in packaging of the various grant and loan combinations.

Many schools require additional information to determine eligibility for scholarships. A form commonly requested by private colleges is the PROFILE from the College Scholarship Service (CSS). This form is available in the counseling office or can be submitted online for students registered with the College Board at www.collegeboard.org.

Need-blind vs. need-aware admissions

If you anticipate applying for financial aid, you may consider asking the admissions staff if their admissions process is need-blind. That means that they do not consider financial need in their decision to accept or deny admission. All colleges would like to be able to say that they do not consider need in the admissions process. And at most colleges the financial aid application is a completely separate process. However, the financial circumstances of a private college may dictate that it be need-aware in its decision practices. If a college's financial resources won't permit it to adequately meet the demonstrated need of an applicant, it is possible that the acceptance letter will go to the equally qualified applicant who does not have demonstrated need.

VIII. OVERVIEW OF SENIOR YEAR

Goals

- Continue college visits.
- Take SAT I, ACT as needed.
- Complete applications.
- Research scholarships and financial aid.
- Meet all deadlines.
- Finish the year strong.

College Bound Programs

- Senior Meetings: August
- Essay Writing Workshop: August
- College Fairs: September
- Monday Morning Meetings
- Visits by college representatives
- Financial Aid Presentation: Nov.
- Alumni Luncheon: May

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GREAT WEB SITES

Because the Internet is a constantly evolving entity, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive list of all its tools. The sites listed below provide a useful sampling of what's out there. You will find that many of these sites have links to other related sites. It is a seemingly inexhaustible resource!

General Resources

College Confidential (<http://www.collegeconfidential.com>)
 All About College: Links (<http://allaboutcollege.com>)
 Campus Tours (<http://www.campustours.com>)
 College Board Online (<http://www.collegeboard.org>)
 College Net (<http://www.collegenet.com>)
 College View (<http://www.collegeview.com/>)
 Peterson's Guide (<http://www.petersons.com>)
 Princeton Review (<http://www.review.com>)
 My College Guide (<http://www.mycollegeguide.org>)
 US News College Search (<http://www.usnews.com/edu/college/cohome.htm#steps>)
 GA college 411 (<http://www.GAcollge411.org>)
 NACAC Web Resources for the College Bound (http://www.nacac.com/w_intro.html)

Applications

College Net ApplyWeb Search (<http://cnsearch.collegenet.com/cgi-bin/APPLY/index>)
 Common Application (<http://commonapp.org>)
 Yahoo: Applications for Individual Colleges
 (http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Higher_Education/College_Entrance/Online_Applications/Individual_Schools)

Testing

The College Board (<http://www.collegeboard.org>) is the location for information about the SAT-I, SAT-II, and Advanced Placement tests. You can find dates and register on-line.
 The ACT (<http://www.act.org>) has information and registration materials for the ACT.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

College Scholarship Service (<http://www.collegeboard.com/pay>)
 fastWEB (<http://www.fastweb.com>)
 FINAID (<http://www.finaid.org>)
 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>)
 Funding Your Education (<http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>)
 Georgia Student Finance Commission - HOPE (<http://www.gacollge411.org>)
 Sallie Mae's Online Scholarship Service (<http://www.salliemae.com>)
 Scholarship Resource Network (<http://www.srnexpress.com/scholarships>)

Rankings

Laissez Faire Rankings (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/rankings.htm>)
 U.S.News and World Report (<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm>)

PULL OUT AND INSERT STATEMENT OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES HERE.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to graduate from The Heritage School a student must complete a total of 23 credit units in grades 9 through 12, including the following:

English	4 credit units	<i>English 9, 10, 11, 12</i>
Math	4 credit units	<i>Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II</i>
Social Science	3 credit units	<i>US History, World History, U.S. Government, Economics</i>
Foreign Language	3 credit units	<i>One language in sequence</i>
Natural Science	4 credit units	
Public Speaking	½ credit unit	
Computer	½ credit unit	
P.E. and Health	½ credit unit each	
Fine Arts	1 course	
Additional Credits	2 credit units	

A student graduating with these minimum requirements will meet or exceed the admission requirements of most colleges and universities. Be aware that some institutions may require more units in science, math, or foreign languages. Colleges like to see **five academic courses** completed each year.

CALCULATING YOUR GPA

The transcript represents your academic record and is an official document provided by our Registrar. The transcript reflects end-of-year grades for each course taken in grades 9 through 12 according to the following scale:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	73-79
D	70-72
F	69 and below

Heritage report cards use numerical grades. The Heritage transcript reports both the numerical score on the 100 point scale and a conversion to a 4.0 scale. The GPA, or grade point average, that appears on your Heritage School transcript is the numerical average of courses taken at Heritage. **Many college admissions offices will recalculate your GPA in order to have a standard mechanism to compare applicants from different schools. Frequently, only core courses are considered in the computation.** Often a 4-point scale is used utilizing the following values:

$$A = 4.0, \quad B = 3.0, \quad C = 2.0, \quad D = 1.0, \quad F = 0.0$$

The total points divided by the total credit units equals your GPA.
If you need to repeat a course all of the grades are used in the calculation.

*Special note: eligibility for the **HOPE Scholarship** is based on specific core curriculum requirements only and requires a 3.0 GPA calculated at the end of the senior year.*

THE COLLEGE BOUND PROGRAM EVENT CALENDAR 2011-2012

DAY / DATE	EVENT	TIME/PLACE	PARTICIPANTS
AUGUST & SEPTEMBER	INDIVIDUAL SENIOR CONFERENCES	COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE	SENIORS & PARENTS BY APPOINTMENT
AUG - NOV	MONDAY MORNING MEETINGS	10:15-10:45 AM US ROOM 4 & 6	ALL SENIORS
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 6	ESSAY WRITING WORKSHOP	3 RD & 4 TH BLOCK US ROOM 4 & 6	ALL SENIORS
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 12	COLLEGE FAIR	DEPART 7:30AM FOR THE LOVETT SCHOOL	JUNIORS
SEPT -MAR	VISITS BY COLLEGE ADMISSION REPS	10:15-10:45 COLLEGE OFFICE	INTERESTED UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS
MON – WED OCTOBER 3-5	COLLEGE VISITATION - JUNIOR CLASS TRIP	DEPART MON AM RETURN WED PM	JUNIORS
THURSDAY OCTOBER 6	ASVAB TESTING	10:00 AM US ROOM 4 & 6	JUNIORS
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12	SENIOR BREAKFAST OUT & APPLICATION REVIEW	7:30AM – 12:00PM	ALL SENIORS
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12	PSAT (NMSQT)	8:30AM-12:20PM SLC	SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17	“PAYING FOR COLLEGE” PRESENTATION	7:00PM US ROOM 4	PARENTS OF JUNIORS & SENIORS
FEB -MAR	MONDAY MORNING MEETINGS	10:15-10:45 AM US ROOM 4	JUNIORS
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 23	COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PANEL	7:00PM US ROOM 4 & 6	PARENTS OF JUNIORS
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 24	COLLEGE ADMISSIONS WORKSHOP	8:30 AM- 12:50 PM US ROOMS 4 & 6	JUNIORS
FEB 28 – MAR 11	JUNIOR CONFERENCES	COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE	JUNIORS & PARENTS BY APPOINTMENT
TUESDAY APRIL 10	KIWANIS ALL A LUNCHEON	FAIRGROUNDS	QUALIFIED SENIORS
THURSDAY APRIL 26	CURRENT 9TH & 10TH GRADE COLLEGE PLANNING BREAKFAST	7:30 AM LIBRARY	PARENTS OF CURRENT 9 TH & 10 TH GRADERS
FRIDAY APRIL 27	CURRENT 8TH GRADE COLLEGE PLANNING BREAKFAST	7:30 AM LIBRARY	PARENTS OF CURRENT 8 TH GRADERS
THURSDAY MAY 4	SENIOR LUNCHEON	12:00 – 1:00 OUTSIDE SLC	ALL SENIORS

SAT AND ACT TESTING SCHEDULE FOR 2011-12

SAT TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DATE	LATE REGISTRATION	ACT TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DATE	LATE REGISTRATION
OCT 1	SEPT 9	SEPT 21	SEPT 10	AUG 12	AUG 26
NOV 5	OCT 7	OCT 21	OCT 22	SEPT 16	SEPT 30
DEC 3	NOV 8	NOV 20	DEC 10	NOV 4	NOV 18
JAN 28	DEC 30	JAN 13	FEB 11	JAN 13	JAN 20
MAR 10*	FEB 10	FEB 24	APR 14	MAR 9	MAR 23
MAY 5	APR 6	APR 20	JUNE 9	MAY 4	MAY 18
JUNE 2	MAY 8	MAY 22			

* Denotes a SAT only testing day. SAT II subject tests not available.

SAT TO ACT CONVERSION TABLE

ACT Composite Score	Estimated SAT CR+M+W	Estimated SAT CR+M+W (Score Range)	ACT Composite Score
36	2390	2380–2400	36
35	2330	2290–2370	35
34	2250	2220–2280	34
33	2180	2140–2210	33
32	2120	2080–2130	32
31	2060	2020–2070	31
30	2000	1980–2010	30
29	1940	1920–1970	29
28	1880	1860–1910	28
27	1820	1800–1850	27
26	1770	1740–1790	26
25	1710	1680–1730	25
24	1650	1620–1670	24
23	1590	1560–1610	23
22	1530	1510–1550	22
21	1470	1450–1500	21
20	1410	1390–1440	20
19	1350	1330–1380	19
18	1290	1270–1320	18
17	1230	1210–1260	17
16	1170	1140–1200	16
15	1100	1060–1130	15
14	1020	990–1050	14
13	950	910–980	13
12	870	820–900	12
11	780	750–810	11

INSERT NCAA ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

INSERT NCAA ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS
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DISCLOSURE POLICY

Many college application forms ask the student if he/she has ever been suspended or expelled from school. More specifically they may also inquire if the school's Honor Council has ever disciplined the student. Though the wording varies from application to application, the spirit of the question is the same: if you have ever been punished by Heritage's Honor Council, or suspended or expelled by any school, you must answer "yes" to these questions. You will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation of the incident.

The Heritage School is ethically obligated as a member of the National Association of College Admissions Counseling to provide relevant information in these situations. We expect you to answer the questions in your portion of the application honestly and suggest that you speak to your college counselor if this scenario applies to you.

Bear in mind that college admissions officers understand the nature of youthful indiscretions and will rarely deny a student admission solely based on a single error in judgment – unless that student is anything less than forthright, honest and remorseful about a previous offense.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE RECORDS AND STUDENT WAIVER OF ACCESS

As part of the college application process, I authorize the release of my official transcript containing a list of courses and grades earned as well as any other educational records to the extent required or requested by the educational institutions to which I apply for admission.

I waive my right to view any teacher or counselor recommendations written in support of my college applications. I understand that recommendations that have not been viewed by students carry increased credibility in the eyes of admissions officials.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT: _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT: _____
(If student is under 18)

DATE: _____

PUT IN APP CHECKLIST HERE

THE HERITAGE SCHOOL APPLICATION DUE DATES FOR 2011-12

Turn in your college and scholarship applications to the college counseling office at least two weeks prior to the mailing deadline. **It is your responsibility to identify your deadlines and plan accordingly.** It is always advisable to complete your applications early rather than wait until the published deadlines.

The dates listed on the right side of the chart are the latest dates that your COMPLETED application and teacher recommendations are due in the college counseling office for the mailing deadlines indicated on the left. *You will specify on the Application Checklist completed for each application the date by which you want your application sent; then allow 30 school days for processing your application packet.*

Note: Regardless of your application deadlines, you must turn in *at least* one college application to the college counseling office by October 1st. Your first application is completed it will be much easier for you to complete the remaining applications. ***The deadline for all applications is December 1st.***

Suggestion: As a general guideline, plan to turn in your applications at least one month before the colleges' published deadlines for regular decision and as early in the fall as possible for rolling admissions.

**THE HERITAGE SCHOOL
COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE
CEEB #112243**

EARLY DECISION AGREEMENT

College or University: _____

Student: _____ SS#: _____

Address: _____

By signing this agreement, the student and parent or guardian acknowledge commitment to a *binding* Early Decision plan. Receipt of this signed form indicates that your institution is the student's first choice and that he or she *will* matriculate at your institution if admitted. Also, the student understands that he or she may *not* apply to any other institution under an Early Decision plan and that upon receiving your notice of acceptance he or she must withdraw all applications initiated at other institutions.

STUDENT

NAME (PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN

NAME (PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

COLLEGE COUNSELOR

NAME (PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ETIQUETTE FOR REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

BEFORE MAKING A REQUEST:

1. **Consider whom to ask.** Teachers from academic subjects (English, math, science, history or foreign language) who have taught you in the 10th or 11th grade are probably the best candidates, although a 9th grade teacher is fine, too, if you have maintained a relationship with him or her.
2. **Note the criteria given by your college or university.** A few colleges do specify that a recommendation come from a teacher in a specific subject. An engineering school, for example, might require a recommendation from your math or science teacher.
3. **Complete the personal information at the top of the teacher recommendation form** supplied by the college. This usually includes your name and address, social security number, etc. Do not expect your teachers to do this.
4. **If included, sign the waiver of access.** Although the comments submitted by your teachers about you will be positive ones, recommendations which have not been seen by the student carry additional credibility in the eyes of admissions officials.

WHEN MAKING A REQUEST:

1. **Go to your teacher at a time convenient for him or her.** Before school or after school would be good times to catch his or her attention for a few minutes.
2. **Request recommendation letters early.** Some teachers (English teachers especially) get flooded with recommendation requests and must have time to spread out their work on these letters. Evaluate your recommendation needs and allow at least *four weeks*.
3. **Give your teacher clear instructions.** *Complete the Request for Teacher Recommendation form* accurately and completely. Use this form to communicate clearly deadlines and any specific instructions.
4. **Concentrate your requests.** You should not ask more than two teachers to write letters of recommendation for you and you should try to ask the SAME two teachers to write a letter for all of the colleges to which you are applying (that require a teacher recommendation). Many colleges also require a Counselor's Recommendation.
5. **If a college does not have a specific teacher recommendation form in their application packet** most will nonetheless read and consider letters submitted by teachers. For example, if you are applying to Vanderbilt (which does have a teacher recommendation form in its application) and Emory (which does not), you could simply ask your teacher to make an extra copy of your recommendation letter to be included in your Emory application. Teachers who make reference to the college name in their letters will gladly change the name for your other schools, but they can do so only if they're aware of your plans.

AFTER YOU REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS:

Keep your teachers informed. By writing you a letter of recommendation, we all become invested in your application. Therefore, we are interested your results. Keep us up to date. Above all else, please be respectful, considerate and thankful to your teachers for their help. Although teachers at Heritage write recommendation letters willingly, remember that they do so *in addition* to their regular daily work here. In many cases, they are sacrificing evening and weekend time to complete these recommendations for you.

Finally...

Please recognize your teacher's efforts in the form of a written *thank-you note*.

GEORGIA'S HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Georgia's HOPE Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated academic achievement throughout high school and maintain that achievement while in college. The scholarship provides funds to address many of the costs associated with tuition, fees and books for students who are pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree in Georgia's colleges and universities.

Eligibility

To receive HOPE Scholarship funding, students must:

1. Have graduated from an eligible high school with a 3.0 grade point average, as defined by the HOPE program.
2. Be enrolled as a degree-seeking student at an eligible public or private college or university or technical college in Georgia.
3. Be a legal resident of Georgia.
4. Be a U.S. citizen or national of the U.S. or have evidence from Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of eligible permanent resident alien status.
5. Be in compliance with Selective Service registration requirements.
6. Be in compliance with the Georgia Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990. A student is ineligible if he or she has been convicted for committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs.
7. Not be in default or owe a refund on a student financial aid program.
8. Maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the college.

Award Amounts

Funding provided to HOPE scholars varies by type of institution.

Public Institutions

Beginning in Fall 2011, students attending public colleges or universities receive a HOPE Award Amount based upon a per hour rate at the institution he or she is attending. To determine your HOPE Award Amount, please review the chart found at gacollege411.org.

Private Institutions

- Full-time students: \$1800 per semester, \$1200 per quarter
- Half-time students: \$900 per semester, \$600 per quarter

Calculating the HOPE GPA:

Beginning with the Class of 2007, HOPE Scholars in the college preparatory curriculum track must graduate from an Eligible High School with a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Each grade earned for attempted course work in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, and Foreign Language, that could have satisfied a core curriculum graduation requirement for the college preparatory diploma, must be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of "A" equals 4.0, "B" equals 3.0, "C" equals 2.0, "D" equals 1.0, and "F" equals 0. When calculating a student's high school grade average for purposes of HOPE Scholarship eligibility, the Commission will remove the weighted portion, added by the student's eligible high school, from any grade earned from Advanced Placement course work and convert the grade to a 4.0 scale. The Commission will then add a standard weight of .5 to such grade, up to the maximum of a 4.0 grade.

For more information on the HOPE Scholarship, go to Gacollege411.org.

COLLEGE COUNSELING TEAM

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