



# Applying to College Night

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*"College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won."*

*~ Frank Sachs*



# Welcome

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Presenters Tonight:

Kerstyn Battenberg – College Programs Coordinator

Kathy Hath – Guidance Counselor

Marianne Scott – College Programs Consultant

*Special thank you to the CdM Foundation for their support of college counseling and for your support of the CdM Foundation.*



# Agenda

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- I. Final College List
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- IV. Getting Organized
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# Final College List

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- 6-10 total colleges that are a good match for you
- 2-3 that look like “sure things” and you would be happy to attend
- 3-4 that look like “good bets”
- 2-3 that look like “reaches”

Use Naviance to compare your college data with that of previous CdM students who have applied to the same colleges. Be sure you have a good balance in your list of colleges. Know what your “hook” might be at each college on your list also.



# The Application

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- Almost all applications are online today. Very few paper applications available.
- Look for the application on college's website or on Common Application list.
- Get a calendar or notebook to keep all application login information and deadlines.
- Be very careful not to get timed out while working on an application.
- Essays should be cut and pasted into the application.
- Make a copy of everything you are submitting before you submit it.
- Use Naviance for application information, links to the college websites, and admission office addresses.



# The Common Application

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- Established in 1975 by 15 private colleges to provide a common, standardized first-year application
- Today 456 colleges are members: public and private, large and small, highly selective and not as selective, from East Coast to West Coast
- New members include USC, UNC Chapel Hill and Whitworth College. Two international colleges this year, including U of St. Andrews in Scotland.
- 2011 application went online July 31 at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Be sure to check for the supplemental applications many colleges also require.
- On Dec. 31, 2010 students submitted 127,175 applications through Common Application.



# Getting Organized

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- Find a location at home where you can work and set out application materials.
- Get a calendar or notebook for keeping application deadlines and application login information.
- Use the College Deadline Application Chart in Chapter VIII My Stuff chapter of your College Planning Guide.
- Be sure your email address and any social networking pages are appropriate for communicating with colleges.
- Remove any spam blockers that would prevent colleges from communicating with you.
- Pick a consistent day and time each week to work on your applications such as Sunday afternoons from 3:00-5:00pm.
- Get a portable hanging file folder box to keep application information by college. Once you have committed to a college, re-label the folders to hold information on things like housing, scholarships, orientation, registration, bursar, and parent communications etc.



# Early Decision and Early Action Applications

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- Early Decision – Are you are ready to apply and have a clear first choice college?
  - ED is binding, you may only apply ED to one college, and you are committed to attending if accepted. Nov. 1 or 15 are the most common ED deadlines and decisions are usually made by Jan.1. ED II deadlines may be later.
- Early Action – Are you ready to apply and want an early decision?
  - EA not binding and you have until May 1 to make your decision if accepted. Nov. 1 and 15 are common deadlines and decisions are usually made by Jan. 1.



# Rolling and Regular Applications

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- Rolling Admissions– There is no real deadline and a college will review your application once your file is complete, usually within 4-6 weeks. Many large public universities use this method and admission gets more competitive at the end of the admission cycle. Apply earlier rather than later.
- Regular Admission – Used by most colleges and involves a set deadline like Jan. 1 or 15, a 2-3 month application review period, and decisions usually in March.
  - UC and CSU applications are available online Oct. 1 and the deadline is Nov. 30.
  - Be sure to submit UC/CSU applications by Nov. 27 to avoid the online system overload.



# Letters of Recommendation Information

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- Colleges request letters of recommendation for additional information and insight about students.
- You must request a letter of recommendation from a counselor or teacher.
- Use Naviance or the college website to see if your colleges require recommendations and from whom.
- Not all colleges require letters of recommendation.
- The UC and CSU campuses do not require letters of recommendation.
- The most selective colleges want recommendations from a guidance counselor and one or two teachers



# Letters of Recommendation Information

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- Coaches, employers, church leaders and others can write letters of recommendation but they should not take the place of counselor or teacher recommendation.
- A letter of recommendation will not “make” or “break” an application.
- A mediocre letter of recommendation will not be help against an applicant.
- Colleges are well aware of the counselor changes at public high schools and the large number of students they serve.
- Colleges are very understanding about counselor letters written without knowing the student well.



# Counselor Letters of Recommendation

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- Counselor letters focus on students in the “big picture”. They speak about the student’s academics, activities, interests, goals and personal qualities.
- A Letters of Recommendation packet must be submitted to your counselor in order to get a counselor letter. The packet can be found on the CdM Counseling page on the school website.
- Please submit your request for a letter of recommendation four weeks before the first application deadline. Counselors will submit all of your letters at the same time.



# Teacher Letters of Recommendation

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- Teacher letters primarily focus on students in an academic setting.
- Colleges prefer letters from junior year and from teachers who know you well. Senior and sophomore year teachers are acceptable also.
- Ask a teacher, “Are you able to write a good letter of recommendation for me?”
- Be sure to give the teacher some insight about your experience in their class.
- Please submit your request for a recommendation four weeks prior to your first college application deadline.
- Be sure to include stamped and addressed envelopes and write thank you notes to your teachers.



# Letter of Recommendations

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## ○ COUNSELOR Recommendations:

- A student must submit their letter of recommendation (LOR) package directly to their counselor and have a face to face conversation. LOR packages cannot be left for a counselor.
- Counselors will go over the packet and have a brief conversation with you.
- Counselors can process up to 10 LOR's per student

## ○ TEACHER Recommendations:

- You must see teachers individually for their letter of recommendation guidelines.
- It is strongly advised that students also make a face-to-face contact with their teacher when requesting a letter of recommendation.



# Letter of Recommendations

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- If you are applying under EARLY ACTION/DECISION, you must submit your packet to your counselor by  
**September 30, 2011**
- For REGULAR DECISION, submit your packet to your counselor  
**4 WEEKS BEFORE DEADLINE**

*(For Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> deadlines, submit LOR packets in mid-November)*



# Letter of Recommendations

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In order for your counselor to write you an EFFECTIVE letter of recommendation, she needs the following:

- Counselor Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire (parent questions are #19 -27) – This is found on Naviance Family Connection:

<https://connection.naviance.com/fc/signin.php?hsid=cdmhs>

- Resume
- Essay
- Receipt for transcript(s).



# Essays

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- Many colleges ask for one or more essays as part of the application.
- Your application tells the admissions office whether you are qualified for acceptance. The essay tells them who you are – do they like you.
- Essays are the “face” of your application.
- Be sure the quality of your writing is consistent throughout your application.
- Essays need to be in your voice.
- Own your stories – add detail, names, make it your own.
- Answer the essay prompt. Don’t make one essay work for all of your applications.



# Transcripts

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- Most colleges request an official transcript with your high school classes and grades submitted with your application. UC and CSU do not want transcripts sent until enrolling.
- Transcripts are purchased through ASB store.
- To request, bring your receipt to Counseling secretary.
- A final transcript will also be required by your college in June.



# Interviews

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- Some private colleges strongly encourage a personal interview for admission. Call the admissions department for an appointment.
- Be prepared to answer and to ask a few questions.
- Do research on the college before the interview.
- Practice your introduction, your eye contact and your handshake.
- Don't be late, dress appropriately and turn off your cell phone.
- Scholarship candidates may have personal interviews required.



# College Rep Visits

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- Many colleges visit CdM in the fall. Be sure to attend a visit if the college is on your list. It shows “demonstrated interest”. Some colleges track who attends the visit by having students sign in or fill out cards.
- The college reps that visit are the same people that read your applications and advocate for you in the admissions process.
- Come to the visit prepared to listen and ask a question.
- Introduce yourself to the college rep if you get a chance.
- How do I find out about visits?
  - Announcements
  - “Like” CdM College Corner on Facebook
  - Naviance
  - [www.cdmcollegecorner.com](http://www.cdmcollegecorner.com) – Regional Meetings posted here as well
  - Calendar in Counseling Office



# Scholarships

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- Many colleges will automatically consider students for merit scholarships, usually for academic achievement.
- Some colleges (USC) have early application deadlines to be considered for scholarships.
- Parents should plan to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) after January 1 and before February 15.
- Some colleges also require the CSS Profile for scholarship and/or financial aid.
- Many local scholarships are posted on Naviance
- More information to come in January – Paying for College Night



# UC Applications

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- The UC application is available Oct. 1 at [www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions)
- Students are encouraged to fill out the UC application before beginning the personal statement.
- Get an unofficial transcript from the counseling department to self report your classes and grades on the UC application.
- You can submit your UC application starting Nov. 1 and the deadline is Nov. 30. Submit by Nov. 27 to avoid system overload.
- UC recommends students apply to at least two UC campuses.
- No transcripts or letters of recommendation are required.



# CSU Applications

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- The CSU applications are available on Oct. 1 at: [www.csumentor.edu/AdmisionApp/](http://www.csumentor.edu/AdmisionApp/)
- Each CSU campus has their own specific application.
- Some CSU campuses may require transcripts with your application.
- No letters of recommendation or essays are required.
- Submit early since some CSU campuses began accepting qualified students in October.



# Common Mistakes Applicants Make

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- No proofreading for spelling and grammar
- Careless copying and pasting of essays
- Using wrong college name in an essay
- Not putting enough time, effort and care into an application
- Not being genuine or truthful
- Applying to a college simply because of ranking
- Undervaluing of work experience (Colleges like it.)
- Not demonstrating interest in the college assuming the GPA/test scores will speak for the student
- Not asking teachers and/or counselors to highlight certain strengths, interests or achievements in a letter of recommendation
- Underestimating the importance of the short answers or essays



# Common Mistakes Applicants Make

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- Not understanding that colleges want to know who students are and what they will bring to the college community
- Being too modest in descriptions of academic awards or extracurricular activities
- Forgetting to explain things well
- Playing games with the admissions process like declaring a major not suited for student
- Over-packaging or telling admissions what they want to hear
- Focusing on quantity not quality of activities and accomplishments
- Applying to too many colleges and doing a poor job



# Perspective on College Admissions

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- The “right college” is a right match for you and for the college.
- There is not one right place where you can be happy and successful. There are a number of them.
- Where you apply to college and get accepted or denied is never a report card on you as a person.
- It is not a report card on your parents either.
- You do not have to share any part of your college application process with anyone else.
- The college admissions process works well if you do your research, are realistic, and stay open minded.
- This time next fall you’ll be starting college.
- Enjoy the journey!