

**THE SCHOLARS’  
ACADEMY  
SENIOR COLLEGE  
GUIDE  
2011-2012**

**THE SCHOLARS’ ACADEMY  
COLLEGE OFFICE**

# PREPARE TO APPLY: SENIOR COLLEGE CHECKLIST

**I have taken the SAT exam**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: W\_\_\_\_\_ R\_\_\_\_\_ M\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: W\_\_\_\_\_ R\_\_\_\_\_ M\_\_\_\_\_

**I have taken all the necessary SAT Subject Tests**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

**I have taken the ACT (if necessary)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

I have met with my counselor.

I have confirmed that my counselor has my:

Two Teacher Raves

Peer Rave

I have completed this information on Naviance:

My Profile

My Resume

My Colleges

Counselor Questionnaire

Parent Rave

I have confirmed a commitment from two teachers to write my recommendation

I have checked my transcript carefully to make sure it is correct

I have discussed a budget / financial plan with my family

I have compiled a list of schools in which I am interested and will apply

I have the application information for all of the schools in which I am interested

I have obtained my “pin” number from the FAFSA website ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov))

# WELCOME TO SENIOR YEAR

- 1<sup>st</sup>** Make an appointment to see Mrs. Villa. If you are planning to apply early decision/early action see her immediately.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>** Check the displays in the guidance suite, Edline, and Naviance for current and late-breaking information. Also make sure to listen carefully to the morning messages in homeroom!
- 3<sup>rd</sup>** Make sure that you register for the SAT, SAT Subject and ACT exams that you plan to take.
- 4<sup>th</sup>** Meet with the two teachers who have agreed to write your letter of recommendations, give them the forms to write their letters for you, and above all – be gracious – it is a lot of work! **Also make sure that your teacher raves have been submitted to the College Office.**
- 5<sup>th</sup>** Use your planner and the two senior college checklists in this booklet to organize your time and record important deadlines. Begin your college applications and finish college essays and supplemental essays.

**Finally-** Do the best you can in all of your classes. Colleges will call us to ask how you are doing in your classes - each marking period of senior year is important.

## IN DEPTH COLLEGE PLANNING - SENIOR TIMETABLE

### SEPTEMBER

1. Register for the standardized tests (SAT, SAT Subject, ACT) you plan to take this fall. Late registration requires an additional fee.
2. Register with the NCAA if you are an athlete and bring your counselor an envelope and stamp so they can mail them your transcript.
3. **Make sure all of your RAVES have been submitted to the College Office.**
4. Double check your course schedule for accuracy and completeness. Make sure you are meeting all graduation requirements.
5. Check your transcript carefully to make sure it is correct. If necessary, request corrections. **Grade changes are due September 26.**
6. Early decision/action candidates should attend the **Early Decision/Early Action workshop on September 23 and see and inform Mrs. Villa immediately (no later than October 3<sup>rd</sup>).**
7. Students seeking admission to the military academies or ROTC should inform the College Office and state representatives immediately.
8. Write or call colleges for applications, or download them if you have not already done so. At the same time, you can request financial aid information.
9. Continue to call, write and/or email to arrange for campus visits as well as interviews with colleges that require them. .
10. Obtain a social security number if you do not have one. **If you do not have a social security number you MUST make an appointment with Mrs. Villa.**
11. Register for the (CSS) College Financial Aid Profile ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)).

## **OCTOBER**

1. Register for November and/or December SAT, SAT Subject, ACT. Observe deadlines.
2. Send standardized tests (SAT, SAT Subject, ACT) to colleges in which you are applying.
3. SAT, SAT Subject and ACT exams are offered.
4. Attend the National Association of College Admissions Counseling National College Fair or the Performing and Visual Arts College Fair (usually held in the spring and fall). <http://www.nacac.com>
5. Attend the Big Apple College Fair held in each borough during the month of October. <http://www.bigapplecollegefairs.com>
6. Early Decision/Action SSR's (Secondary School Reports) are due **to The College Office by October 14.**
7. Call, write, email, and download college applications and financial aid information.
8. Continue going to college meetings and visit college campuses and Open Houses.
9. Have the College Office and your English teachers review your essays.
10. CSS Profile due for select colleges for Early Decision applicants.

## **NOVEMBER**

**SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORTS MUST BE HANDED IN Between November 7-11.** Give the College Office secondary school report portions of applications (with envelopes addressed to the college with Scholars' Academy as the return address and four stamps on each envelope.) Put a post card, stamped and addressed to you, in each envelope so you know the college has received it.

1. Make sure you have chosen at least two safe schools that you would gladly attend.
2. SAT, SAT Subject and ACT exams are offered. Be sure to send scores to ALL colleges to which you are applying.
3. Meet with the teachers who are writing your letters of recommendation and give them envelopes addressed to the colleges you are applying to. Make sure the envelopes have stamps, have the return address of Scholars' Academy, and have your name and official class written on the inside flap. You should also include in the envelope a stamped self addressed postcard to make sure your recommendation was received.
4. The deadline for most Early Decision and Early Action applications is November 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>.
5. Finish your application essays and supplements if required.

## **DECEMBER**

1. Send your completed applications along with the application fee.
2. Confirm with the College Office that your SSR's are complete and have been sent. Check with your teachers to make sure they have mailed your recommendations (Did you include stamped postcards?) Observe all deadlines.
3. Put together your family financial papers. FAFSA and CSS forms are available on-line. ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). & <http://profileon-line.collegeboard.com>. Your College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS Profile) should be filed as soon as possible for those schools that require it. (You may not complete the FAFSA UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>.)
4. Remember mid-year grades are VERY important. Continue to work hard.
5. Continue to go on interviews and visit college campuses.
6. Early Decision and Early Action Applicants should hear from their schools by mid-month.

## **JANUARY**

1. File FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as soon as possible **after** January 1<sup>st</sup>. You will receive a preprinted TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) application when you file the FAFSA and include at least one New York State College.
2. Mid-year marks will be sent to colleges if you have handed in stamped, addressed envelopes. (Most colleges require them).

## ***FEBRUARY***

Use the President's Week recess to visit campuses of schools not yet seen.

## ***MARCH***

1. Make sure you have completed all financial aid applications (FAFSA, CSS Profile, TAP and institutional forms).
2. It's not too late to apply to some colleges!
3. Continue to visit colleges.
4. Keep your grades up!

## ***APRIL***

Most colleges mail their regular admissions and wait-list decisions this month.

## ***MAY***

1. Notify all colleges that accept you of your decision. You must accept admission to one, and only one, college by **May 1st**. Send a deposit to the college of your choice. Colleges usually require a response and deposit by May 1st. Do NOT double deposit (you may be denied admission at both schools). When you have made the decision of which college to attend, it is your responsibility to notify the other colleges that you are not attending promptly. (By May 1st) Send these letters as soon as possible as there may be students on a wait list. Be polite in your letters! You may want to transfer to one of these schools at a future date and you want to maintain a reputation of honesty and politeness. Observe deadlines.
2. Inform the College Office of your decisions, and enter all decisions in Naviance.
3. Take your AP exams.
4. You should have received your TAP acknowledgment. If the school you will be attending is different from the one listed on your TAP acknowledgment, change the school and correct any incorrect financial data. Return the correction form to the processor by May 1st. (Tuition Assistance Program grants are available only for New York State residents who attend college in New York State.)
5. Continue to update Naviance with all admissions and scholarship decisions. (Make sure to indicate the school you will be attending!)

## ***JUNE***

1. Complete graduation requirements.
2. Complete the school's the graduation survey.
3. Complete the final transcript request form. Provide a stamped, addressed envelope for your final transcript to be sent.
4. Obtain loan application forms from local banks if needed.
5. Males must register with the Selective Service at the age of 18 to be eligible for financial aid.

# EARLY ACTION, EARLY DECISION & ROLLING DECISION

**Early Decision** – ED deadlines are generally in early November. You may only apply to one school ED. If you are admitted you must attend as this is a legally binding agreement. You will be notified of the decision in December. You may apply to other non-binding schools early action or to rolling decision schools. If you are admitted ED you must withdraw all other applications.

**Early Decision II** – A second round of ED. Deadlines are in January. You will be notified of the decision in February. You must also apply to other schools regular and rolling decision simultaneously. You can apply ED II if you are denied or deferred ED I by another school.

**Early Action** – You apply early, are notified early but do not have to attend and may continue to apply to other colleges. You may apply ED to other schools simultaneously.

**Single Choice Early Action** – You apply early and are notified early. You can not apply EA or ED to any other school. You can apply to other schools regular or rolling decision. (In the past Yale University offered this application option).

**Restrictive Early Action** – You apply early and are notified early. You may apply to other EA schools or rolling schools. You may not apply to another school ED. (In the past Georgetown, Stanford, and Boston college offered this application option).

**Rolling** – You can apply to rolling decision schools beginning in September continuing through the spring. You will usually be notified of the decision within weeks of completing your application. With rolling decision schools we suggest you apply as early as possible to increase your chances of gaining admission

## How Do I Know If I Should Apply Early Decision to a School?

**If you cannot answer YES to each one of these, you should not apply early decision:**

1. Have you visited the college and spent enough time there to have a good feel for the life on that campus? Are you sure that this is the place you want to spend your next four years?
2. Do you feel comfortable in that particular college environment?
3. Are you positive, that if accepted there, you would not want to go anywhere else?
4. Are you comfortable with the financial commitment you will have to make to go to this school? If this means taking out loans to pay for this education, are you and your family comfortable with this option?
5. Do the scores on your standardized tests and your grade point average match those required for acceptance at this school (based on the statistical data you have collected/seen)?

Early decision is a way for you to demonstrate to a school that you are most interested in going there. It is a way for a school to accept (in a binding acceptance) qualified students earlier in the application process. Typically, only strong candidates (students who match the academic qualifications) apply early decision. It is because of this fact, that a very high percentage of students who apply via the early decision process get accepted. A less strong candidate does not have a greater chance of getting into a school if you apply early decision.

# SELECTING A COLLEGE – YOUR ADMISSIONS STRATEGY

Your choices should be made up of two safety schools, two target schools, and two reach schools. In addition we strongly encourage **all Scholars' Academy Seniors to submit an application to CUNY.** We also highly recommend you to apply to SUNY.

1. **Safety Schools** – schools that appear on your list of highly desirable schools that you are relatively certain will accept you AND that you can definitely afford to attend. For some, this might be a CUNY, which offers safety and affordability, or SUNY which has higher level SAT & GPA requirements.
2. **Target Schools** – schools on your list that are “likely” to accept you based on your academic profile. Target schools are never a certainty as academic profiles change each year based on the applicant pool.
3. **Dream/Reach Schools** – schools that “may” accept you, but based on your academic profile, do not fall into your list of target schools. Acceptance to these schools may be based on factors other than academic profile and are therefore never considered a certainty even for those students whose academic profile meet or exceed the profile of that particular school.

## **Academics:**

1. Does the college offer the program(s) in which you are interested?
2. Is the college known for a particular program?
3. What are the school's philosophy and policies regarding course requirements, selecting a major, double majoring, and cross registering at neighboring schools?
4. What are the strengths or weaknesses of the program(s) in which you are interested?
5. What is the student-to-teacher ratio? How many students are there in a typical class?
6. Are most classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?
7. Do undergraduates have access to professors or only to teaching assistants?
8. Is there a core curriculum? Are there distribution requirements? Are decisions on curriculum left largely up to the student?
9. Will the academic work challenge me? Will it be too demanding and not allow time for extracurricular activities and socializing?
10. What is the required grade point average? SAT I/ACT and SAT II scores?
11. Does the school accept Advanced Placement credit? Is there a minimum score needed? Does the school grant sophomore standing or will I be placed in advanced courses while retaining freshman status?
12. Is there an honors program available at the school? Who is eligible to participate?
13. Does the school offer/encourage study abroad or at another U.S. campus?
14. What is the dropout rate? What percentage of freshmen return for the sophomore year?
15. What percentage of students graduate in four years?
16. Do most of the graduates go on to graduate school immediately upon graduation? What is the rate of acceptance to medical, law or business schools?
17. How many graduates go right into the marketplace? Is there a job placement office that assists students? Which firms recruit on campus?
18. Are there opportunities for hands-on experience while students are in college?

## **Location (Urban vs. Rural), Size and Student Population:**

Smaller schools may be more nurturing and supportive whereas larger schools may offer greater diversity, both academically and socially. Some small schools belong to a consortium that enables them to offer greater diversity while maintaining their supportive atmosphere.

1. Do you prefer a school in a large city, college town, or a rural setting far from a major city?
2. Do you prefer a school close to home where you will be able to visit home easily for a weekend or holiday break?
3. Is the school financially feasible for your family to visit you?
4. Is the school small (fewer than 1000 students), medium-size or large (more than 15,000)? Does size matter to you? Is the school ethnically diverse?

5. Does the college attract students from all over the United States and world or are the majority of students from the immediate region?
6. What are the students like? Will I fit in? Will I be able to make friends?
7. What is the male/female ratio?
8. What kind of religious life exists on campus?
9. Can the school meet my special needs (dietary/religious/medical/disability)?
10. Do students primarily live on campus, off-campus, or do most students commute from home?
11. What does the social life on campus revolve around? How important are fraternities and sororities? Varsity sports?

### **Facilities:**

1. What is the size of the library? Is the campus library tied into a larger network?
2. Are computers required for incoming freshmen?
3. Are there adequate computer facilities available on campus?
4. Can computers in the dorms be hooked into the campus network? Is the library directly accessible from these computers?
5. Are there adequate sports and recreational facilities (e.g., a swimming pool, athletic fields for non-varsity players, gyms, music practice rooms)?
6. Are a wide variety of intercollegiate and intramural sports programs available?

### **Living Conditions/Safety:**

1. Is campus housing readily available? Is the housing guaranteed for all four years?
2. Are the dorms coed? Are the bathrooms? Are single sex dorms available?
3. Are alternative housing arrangements available?
4. How safe is the campus? What security measures are available?

### **Financial Factors:**

1. What is the total cost to attend this school? (Including tuition, room and board, books, travel to and from campus, and pocket money)?
2. Is financial aid available? Is the package offered negotiable?
3. Remember: You will probably need money to finance your graduate studies.
4. Keep in mind that approximately 98% of all financial aid is need based. A limited number of merit scholarships are available from certain institutions.

## **COLLEGE APPLICATIONS**

**The Golden Rule of the College Application Process is: Don't file an application for admission to a college that you would not gladly attend if offered the opportunity.**

Applications usually consist of the following parts:

### **1. The Application**

The application contains your personal background information and your college essay. Most colleges require a personal essay and many require additional "supplemental" essay(s).

Once you have completed the entire application, enclose the application fee, and then **MAKE A COPY OF THE ENTIRE APPLICATION, ESSAY, AND KEEP RECORDS OF YOUR PAYMENT.** Make sure to submit your applications by the colleges' deadlines.

### **2. Standardized Test scores**

You must send your SAT, SAT II, and/or ACT scores directly to the colleges that you are applying to. Scholars' Academy does not send standardized test scores to colleges.

Student's who receive free and reduced lunch, may obtain fee waivers for SAT I, SAT II, and ACT, as well as college application fees in limited quantities. Check with the College Coordinator to obtain a fee waiver application, or you can download an application from the College Board website, and submit it together with a copy of your parents' latest income tax and withholding tax (W2) forms.

*If you wish to apply for fee waivers for your college applications, you must first have used fee waivers for an SAT I and/or SAT II or ACT exam.*

### 3. Teacher Recommendations

Teacher recommendations are mailed directly to colleges by your teachers. You must provide your teachers with the teacher recommendation form from the application, an envelope addressed to the college and 3 stamps for each school you are applying to no later than **November 11, 2011**. The return address on the envelope should be the teachers name at the Scholars' Academy address. On the inside flap of the envelope you must write: your name, **official class**, college, and due date.

### 4. The Secondary School Report (SSR)

The SSR is a request for an official school transcript of your grades, accompanied by an evaluation of your work, character, and activities that has been written by your guidance counselor. You will complete the top portion of the form. Your counselor will complete the form and attach their letter of recommendation, along with an official transcript and a school profile.

Before giving the College Office the SSR, be sure that all of information on the form is complete, except for their signature. **BE SURE TO COMPLETE AND SIGN THE WAIVER FOR EACH APPLICATION**. You will need to give the College Office a business sized envelope with four stamps and the address of the college clearly typed or printed on the front. On the inside flap, be sure to list your name, official class, name of college you are applying to, and the due date. The return address should be your counselor's name and the Scholars' Academy address.

## FOR EACH COLLEGE APPLICATION, DO THE FOLLOWING

1. Prepare the college application Secondary School Report Form (sometimes called counselor form or high school transcript request), which can be found in each college application.

2 Fill in whatever information you can on the college application Secondary School Report (SSR) form.

- Your name and personal information
- Counselor's Name: **Michelle Villa**
- Title: **Guidance Counselor**
- Counselor's Signature: **leave blank**
- Date of graduation: **June 2011**
- Counselor email: **mvilla@scholarsnyc.com**
- School: **The Scholars' Academy**
- Address: **320 Beach 104<sup>th</sup> Street, Rockaway Park, NY 11694**
- Telephone: **718-474-6918; Fax: 718-945-8958**
- **Scholars' Academy CEEB Code: 334873**

3. Prepare one 9x12 Manila envelope for each SSR

- Include College Application SSR form
- Addressed to the college
- Return addressed to Mrs. Villa at Scholars' Academy
- Four stamps
- On inside flap of envelope, write your name, **official class**, name of college, and application due date

## **DEADLINES ARE CRITICAL!!!!!!**

Each college will inform you of its application deadline in its application instructions and/or catalog. Be sure to follow the schedule of College Office due dates. **You must meet all filing deadlines in order for your application to be considered. Please use the college application process checklist provided in this booklet to help you track and meet deadlines.**

### **YOU MUST CONTINUE TO DO WELL THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR!**

**Colleges can and will rescind an admission offer if you do not maintain your grades throughout the school and/or if you drop a class.**

## **FINANCIAL AID**

How much financial aid you are offered may be a large factor in determining which college you attend. Most institutions award a large percentage of their financial aid based on need so it is important for families to assess their resources (current income, assets and ability to borrow) to determine what resources they have available to pay for college. It is important that your family's tax forms and monetary records are up-to-date. Financial aid forms have to be filled out **every year** you attend college.

*"Need"* is the difference between what it costs to attend a particular college and what your family can afford to contribute toward meeting those expenses as determined by the FAFSA form and the CSS profile (where required). It is important to realize that colleges expect students to contribute a much larger percentage of their assets (cash, bank accounts, and other investments such as mutual funds) and earnings than they will expect your parents to contribute.

The five major components of a student's budget are:

- Tuition and fees
- Book and supplies
- Room and Board
- Personal expenses
- Transportation

You should not rule out any school because of cost. You may qualify for enough financial aid to be able to attend. Your final list of college choices should, however, contain at least one financial, as well as academic, "safety" school.

The four types of Financial Aid fall into two main categories:

### **Gift Aid**

1. Grants – funds awarded on the basis of need. Grants are not repaid.
2. Scholarships – funds awarded on the basis of need and achievement in a variety of areas including academics, athletics, art, leadership, or community service. These funds are not repaid.

### **Self-Help**

1. Loans – money that must be repaid after graduation. Student loans have the advantage of lower interest rates than commercial loans.
2. Work Study– the College will provide you with an on campus job enabling you to earn funds toward tuition payment.

Financial Aid administrators usually put together an aid package that combines gift aid and self-help. The proportion of grants, loans, and work-study can vary significantly from package to package.

You **apply for financial aid after you have applied to college**. Many highly selective colleges are “need-blind” in their acceptance of students. This means that the colleges decide whether or not to admit you regardless of whether you apply for financial aid (before making a decision about aid.) Once you are accepted, the college will work with you and your family to create an aid package that will enable you to attend. Do not wait until you are accepted to file for financial aid! If you leave an item blank on any of your applications, you may reduce your eligibility for aid.

A student’s need is determined by:

1. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
2. College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS Profile)
3. A University’s or College’s own financial aid forms.
4. New York State schools require the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) form.

The FAFSA is provided by the United States Department of Education. First students and parents need to obtain a pin number to be able to complete the FAFSA after January 1st of senior year. The FAFSA is available online. For some colleges and state schools, this is the only form you will be asked to complete. After you file your FAFSA, you will receive a SAR (Student Aid Report). Check all numbers carefully. Make sure they reflect the numbers on your parents’ most recent tax forms. Also check to see that all colleges listed are correct. Make corrections if necessary and return the corrected form to the processor immediately.

*The CSS Profile* You must register for the CSS Profile on-line. Registration is \$25.00. Each individual report costs \$16.00 per school. A list of schools requiring the profile is included with each application. After registering, you will receive a more detailed financial aid form to complete. As soon as possible, return the completed profile form to the processor. The College Scholarship Service (CSS) will send you an acknowledgment of receipt of your profile form. This acknowledgment will list the colleges to which CSS has sent your information, as well as messages from each college.

Once the aid administrator at each college you have been accepted to has analyzed your information, you will receive an award letter. The award letter explains the type of aid you will be receiving (Federal, State and/or institutional grants).

### **Financial Aid Information**

- a. The Financial Aid Information Page – [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
- b. FAFSA on the Web – [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov) (Tech support: 1-800-801-0576)
- c. New York State Aid – [www.hesc.com](http://www.hesc.com)
- d. Free scholarship search service – [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- e. Financial Aid Calculators – [www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml)

To see a forecast of what your financial aid package will be: [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov)

To learn about the financial aid process and loans [www.stufund.com](http://www.stufund.com)

## College Office Calendar 2011-2012

September 9		Last day to register for October 1 <sup>st</sup> SAT/SAT Subject Tests
September 13	12:00PM-1:30PM	Broadridge Orientation/Career Awareness
September 16		Last day to register for October 22 <sup>nd</sup> ACT
September 20	9:50AM-10:50AM	Transcript Review and College Office Overview Workshop
<b>September 26</b>		<b>Final date to submit Transcript changes for Seniors</b>
September 27	9:00AM-10:00AM	CUNY Visit for Seniors
September 30		Quest Bridge Applications Due
<b>September</b>	<b>7PM-8:30PM</b>	<b>Senior College Night</b>
October 1		SAT/SAT Subject Test Day
October 3		Students who plan to apply ED/EA/Priority must notify Mrs. Villa
October 7		Last day to register for November 5 <sup>th</sup> SAT/SAT Subject Tests
October 14		SSR (Secondary School Report) Day for Early Action/Early Decision. All forms and envelopes must be completed and handed in to the College Office
October 22		ACT Day
November 4		Last day to register for December 10 <sup>th</sup> ACT
November 5		SAT/SAT Subject Test Day
November 8		Last day to register for December 3 <sup>rd</sup> SAT/SAT Subject Tests

November 7-11		SSR Week (Secondary School Report) - All forms/envelopes must be completed and handed to the College Office. The College Office will not guarantee that SSR's handed in after 11/11 will be processed in time to meet a January 1st deadline.
December 3		SAT/SAT Subject Test Day
December 10		ACT Day
December	7:00PM-9:00PM	Financial Aid Night: Speaker TBD