“How are students admitted, and how do families make choices?”
Tonight’s Agenda

- **How colleges select our students**
  1. Criteria for admission
  2. How we prepare
  3. Strategies for successful placements

  *then*....

- **How the students select colleges**
  1. Preliminary Research
  2. Secondary Research
College Criteria for Student Admission

- Grade Point Average
- Strength of Transcript
- SAT/ACT Scores
- Recommendations
- Activities/Awards
- Personal Essays
- Interviews
- Special Talent/ “hook”
- “Interest Quotient”: Visit the campus!
College Criteria For Student Admission

- Grades/Strength of Transcript
  Understand the “5 Majors” that colleges often use to recalculate GPA:
  1. English
  2. Social Studies
  3. Mathematics
  4. Science
  5. World Language
## College Criteria for Student Admission

### The Transcript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>SPANISH</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ART 2</td>
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<td>MUSIC 2</td>
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<td>PHYSICS 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORY 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Credits Earned:** 20

**Cumulative GPA:** 4.00
Rigor/Strength of Transcript

- Are our students taking the most rigorous courses in which they can be successful?
- Are Chemistry, Physics, AP courses, Foreign Language etc. available and not taken?
- What if a student is not eligible for Honors, AP, etc?
- Be a great student in your level.
GPA facts

- WHS will calculate an unweighted and a weighted GPA at the end of junior year.
- Most colleges will request mid-year grades in the senior year.
- We don’t send them unless the application was CommonApp or if requested in writing by the student.
- Many colleges recalculate the GPA using the 5 Majors.
SAT/ACT

- According to polls, the 3rd most important criteria behind GPA/strength of program.
- Better to have strong transcript than strong test scores.
- Develop a testing calendar:
  - when to take SAT, SAT Subject tests, and/or ACT.
  - When and in what manner will you prepare?
More on Standardized tests

- Test Optional Colleges [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)
- Score Choice
- Method Test Prep
- Use the ACT website and Collegeboard.org; They have a wealth of resources for college planning and test prep!
- Question and answer service, Khan Academy, college search engines, Full practice exams
EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

➢ How much time does the student devote to the activity?
➢ How significant is the contribution?
➢ Long lists are not read…Depth is best!!
➢ Evidence of leadership; “joined” vs. “founded”
➢ Volunteerism…real involvement!!!!
➢ Specialists are exceptional (research candidate, champion athlete, published author, musical prodigy, etc.)
➢ Uncommon undertakings (Oboe players, entrepreneurs, science researchers, ground breakers)
Common App Essay Prompts

No less than 250 words, with a limit of 650

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.
The Essay

港澳 TIPS

- Beware of Overworked Topics
  - Winning or losing the big game
  - The orchestra’s annual concert
  - Boyfriend/Girlfriend problems
  - The dear departed family pet
  - Anything that suggests the applicant doesn’t see the world beyond the boundaries of high school
  - Oversimplified solutions to world problems
  - A summary of your accomplishments
ESSAY TIPS

- Aim for Originality
  - Overcoming adversity
  - Love of learning
  - Insight into an uncommon lifestyle, experience or achievement (being raised by a grandparent; attending school in Saudi Arabia; climbing a challenging mountain)
  - Information about an unusual hobby (building Victorian dollhouses; raising goats; collecting political campaign buttons)
  - Relate to lessons learned from literature
  - Are you passionate about what you are writing about?
More Essay Tips

➢ A title is a nice touch
➢ The introduction is crucial
➢ Good writers take risks with style
➢ Vocabulary should be varied and interesting
➢ Humor is a big plus
➢ Sentimentality can be an asset if used sparingly
➢ Show off an academic side
➢ Be revealing
➢ Finish Strong
➢ Check and recheck for spelling and grammar
➢ Unless otherwise directed, aim for one or two typed pages
➢ Sleep on it
➢ Get a second opinion; English teachers for grammar and Counselors for content
➢ The toughest topic isn’t worth tackling
Letters of Recommendation

➢ Your Guidance Counselor letter
  - If we don’t know it, we cannot report it! Let us know what you have done, what you would like to do, and what you are passionate about.
  - Fill out the “Counselor Recommendation Form”
  - The “Parent Comment Sheet” is also very helpful.
Informal Recommendation Forms

- Give to teachers who will **NOT** write you a letter of recommendation.
- These forms provide anecdotes for Counselor letters.
- Give a total of three out to various teachers you have had or have currently.
Teacher Letters of Recommendation

- Request politely in junior year and keep the teacher informed of your progress.
- Fill out the Teacher letter of Recommendation form and give to two teachers.
- Sample question: “Describe your favorite unit or aspect of my class.”
A word about letters of recommendation…

- Don’t ask to see your letters. It renders them worthless.
- Our teachers write great letters…we would never send out a bad letter.
- Be sure to give supplementary forms to both counselors and teachers for their letters, if not on Naviance.
Another word about really preparing for college…

• This is a lot of work. If you do all of it, your son/daughter will have little ownership in the process. They may make a bad choice as a result.
• Tips: Have him/her sit in front of the computer, with you off to the side.
• Let him/her explore and play with the data.
• Don’t nag. Kids avoid this because it scares them. Ask questions about their concerns.
More on “ownership”

• Don’t make it too easy for your son/daughter to tune out: if they need to pick up a form from us, let them do it. Parents should not do the “leg work” for college applications.

• Have the student call/email the college.

• In some cases, the first decision a student has to make is where to go to college! What other decisions would you allow them to make along the way?
Who conducts them?

- A dean
- An admissions counselor
- An admissions staff member
- A faculty member
- A student
- An alumnus
College Criteria for Student Admission

**INTERVIEWS**

What might be asked?

- What classes have you enjoyed most?
- What do you do outside of class?
- What do you do during the summer?
- What books have you found enjoyable but challenging?
- Whom do you admire?
- What are your post-college plans?
- What are you looking for in a college?
- What brings you to this college?
- What will you contribute to this college?
College Criteria for Student Admission

“HOOKS”

- Alumni Connections
- Athletes
- Talent in the Arts
- Diversity
- Geography
- The Invisible Hook (institutional needs)
How am I doing?

Any questions so far?

Can anyone tell me the score of the Islander game?
Student Criteria For College Selection

How to decide where to apply…

To how many colleges should I apply…
  Two Reach schools
  Three Target/Range/Likely Schools
  One or Two Safety Schools
Do you remember buying your first house?
What were your preliminary criteria?
- cost
  - location
- good education (schools)
  - how much work was involved?
That must have narrowed your choices, right?
Now apply that principle to “buying” a college...

- 6 Basic Criteria to narrow the search
  1. Location
     - urban, suburban, rural
     - distance from home
     - local characteristics
  2. Cost
     - Public and Private
     - Factors may affect final cost
     - Financial “reach, range and safety” colleges
3. Major

- Start looking at majors early.
  - Make a list of 20 possible majors, and begin to narrow them down.
  - Applying undeclared can be OK, but go to a college that has your interests.
  - Look at Naviance with your student!
4. Selectivity (Can I get in?)

- Reach school (college criteria somewhat above my range)
- Range school (college criteria fits my grades and scores)
- Safety School (college criteria somewhat below my range)
- Apply to all three types!
- Consult your counselor as well as Naviance to determine reach, range and safety.
5. Size/Demographics

- Student population: Michigan State = 37,985 students, Sage College = 848 students...and many others in between!
- What do large populations offer? Smaller populations?
- Demographics/diversity/male:female ratio
- What about acreage? Size of campus? Layout of campus?
6. Special Considerations

- LD programs
- Athletics
- Health related circumstances
- Honors programs
- ROTC
- *Uncle Louie lives nearby*
- *They have a Marching Band*
- *They have great art studios*
- *I can’t put my finger on it…I just had a good feeling there.*
Secondary Research

- Once we eliminate the vast majority of colleges, we can dig deeper in our questioning.
- At this point, you are looking at 15-25 colleges at most.
- Go to college fairs and open houses AFTER preliminary research with SECONDARY questions.
Some Secondary Concerns

- Scholarships
- Study abroad programs
- Lab hours (gym hours, etc.) for undergrads
- Housing situations (triples, coed dorms, etc.)
- Work availability/work study programs
- NCAA situations
- Portfolio/audition requirements
- Campus safety
More Secondary Concerns and Questions

- College Level Credits…should we pay for them? Should we seek to transfer them?
- AP Courses
- Equipment needed for certain majors
- Internships sites and availability
- Recruitment and current job placement
- Parent access to information
- Campus safety
After preliminary and secondary research...

- Attend the Spring College Expo at Hofstra on April 22, 2020 from 5:30PM until 8:30PM.
- Ask “secondary” questions.
- “Browse”. Learn about colleges you might have overlooked.
Coming attractions
February 11

➢ Richard Wilen, Assistant Provost for Admissions and Recruitment at LIU Post, will share her expertise on Financial Aid.

➢ We will have a tutorial on the Common Application and Naviance/Family Connection.