

BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE PLANNING FOR SENIORS

FALL 2017



1980 Allston Way | Berkeley, CA | 510-644-6121

College Board (CEEB) School Code for Berkeley High School: 050290



IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF SENIORS

COLLEGE APPLICATION INFORMATION NIGHT

Tuesday, September 12, 2017, at 6:30–8:30 p.m., BHS Library

COLLEGE APPLICATION WORKSHOPS

Help is available in the BHS Library Computer Lab at the following times:

Every Monday, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

Every Wednesday and Thursday in October and November, 3:00–5:00 p.m

COLLEGE FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 6:30–8:30 p.m., BHS Library

CASH 4 COLLEGE: FASA AND DREAM ACT APPLICATION WORKSHOP

Thursday, November 9, 2017, at 6:30–8:30 p.m., BHS Library and CCC

**PLEASE NOTE THAT DATES ARE TENTATIVE. CHECK THE
BHS COLLEGE & CAREER CENTER WEBSITE FOR UPDATES.**

See the Senior Year College Application Time Line (inserted here and on the College & Career Center website) for a month-by-month schedule to help you navigate the college application process throughout your senior year.



Thank you to the BHS Development Group
for funding of copy costs.

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CHAPTER 1

THE APPLICATION PROCESS



The following chart provides an overview of the forms you will need to send to the different types of colleges to which you might apply. The sections following describe the steps to apply to the CSU system, the UC system, California community colleges, and private colleges.

All colleges require an application form. They also all require that a final high school transcript be sent in June.

The name and address on the application must match the name and address on the BHS transcript and on the SAT/ACT tests. If they don't match, you should talk to the College Advisor.

The process of applying for financial aid starts in January of your senior year, after you have already submitted most or all of your admissions applications. You may not want to spend time completing an application for a college that will not be affordable. To get an estimate **now** of your costs and financial aid, go to the college's website and search for "net price calculator."

Application Requirements for Different Types of Colleges

Colleges	Essays	SAT Reasoning Test/ACT Scores	SAT Subject Test Scores	Official Transcript through Junior Year	Counselor's Recommendation (Secondary School Report)	Mid-year Report (1 st semester senior grades)	Teacher Recommendations	Supplements
UC system	Yes	Yes	No*	No (self-report)	No	No	No**	No
CSU system	No	Yes	No	Yes** *	No	No	No	No
Community Colleges	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Non-California Public Colleges	Check website							
Private Colleges	Yes	Check website						

* See websites for individual campuses to find out which majors at what campuses recommend (but not require) that students take SAT Subject Tests.

** Do not submit letters of recommendation for your UC application unless you receive an email requesting them for certain campuses/majors.

*** Unless the CSU sends a message when it confirms receipt of your application, telling you not to send the transcript.

Fees for Sending Test Scores

Once you have taken the SAT or ACT, you must send the scores to your colleges. In addition to fees for taking the SAT and ACT tests, there are also fees for sending scores.

SAT

The College Board will send test results to four schools for free if you make your request at test registration. After that, the fee is \$11.25 each report.

ACT

The fee is \$12 for each report.

CSU Application Process

COMPLETING THE APPLICATIONS

The CSU application is available at <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply>.

Each campus requires a separate application. You do not have to fill out a whole new application for each campus, but you do need to enter campus-specific information—such as the major—before sending the application electronically to each campus. To avoid having to make multiple corrections, before creating a second application make sure the information on the first application form is absolutely correct. After each application is submitted electronically, it is important to print out and save the application and the confirmation of receipt.

If applying with a paper application, you will need either to fill out **one** application **for each campus** or make photocopies of a partially completed CSU application and then fill in the campus-specific information. **You must sign each application individually.** The completed applications need to be mailed, along with a check, to **each campus**, after October 1. Get a Certificate of Mailing from the post office (do not mail the application by certified mail). Keep a copy of the application.

Follow the directions to pay the application fees (last year the fees were \$55/campus).

Be aware that the CSUs do not accept deferrals to another year. If you are accepted, you may not take a “gap” year without reapplying.

Timing

You can submit your application beginning on October 1. It is a good idea to submit this application as soon as it is available online. The last day to submit a CSU application is November 30. CSU website servers can get overloaded as the deadline nears, so you should apply early enough to avoid frustrating delays at the end of November.

Transcripts

When completing the CSU application, you will need an unofficial transcript to self-report grades up to this point. The CSUs do not require official transcripts be sent at the time of application.

Fees

The application fee is \$55 per campus.

California residents who demonstrate financial need may qualify for an application fee waiver. Students are allowed to submit application fee waivers for up to four CSU campuses when they apply using the CSUMentor site.

Getting Help

For help filling out the CSU application, you can attend one of the CSU workshops offered through the College & Career Center. Dates are listed on the BHS e-Tree, in the *College & Career Center Bulletin*, and in the *Daily Bulletin*.

CREATING A CSU ACCOUNT

Upon receipt of the application, each CSU campus will send the applicant instruction on how to create an online account. **You are expected to check your CSU accounts (each campus requires a separate account) regularly for updates** on your admission status and to see if the CSU needs additional information to be sent (such as first semester grade reports).

SENDING SAT OR ACT TEST SCORES

You must send your SAT or ACT scores to the CSUs; this is not automatically done.

For the SAT, request scores be sent to each of the CSU campuses to which you are applying. **Use the code 3594 and pay only one fee.**

If you are sending an ACT score, use the ACT Scores Manager on the CSU Mentor website to release ACT scores to additional campuses for free. First, send scores to one CSU campus, then follow instructions for sending the scores to the other CSU campuses.

Some CSUs (for example, San Jose State, Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo, and San Diego State) require that all college entrance tests be taken by November. Check individual CSU websites for the last acceptable test date.

SENDING TRANSCRIPTS

Send an official transcript to each CSU when the CSU confirms receipt of the application, unless the school says not to. Follow these steps:

Complete and sign a transcript request form (blue) for each campus. If you are under 18, your parent or guardian must sign the request form. Forms are available in the Registrar's Office (Room D173).

Paper-clip each transcript request form to a stamped business-size envelope, addressed to the correct campus. On the envelope, write out the BHS return address: Berkeley High School, 1980 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Turn these in to the Registrar's office in D173.

APPLYING FOR HOUSING

Not all CSUs guarantee housing for first-year students. Priority for housing is determined by the application receipt date.

For many CSUs, housing applications should be submitted soon after the regular application is sent in, even though you do not know if you will be accepted.

If applying to San Francisco State, call the Housing Office (415-338-1067) to request a housing application or apply online, since housing fills up quickly there. You can send in your housing application even before sending in your regular application.

CSU ASSESSMENT (PLACEMENT) TESTS

Before accepted students enroll, CSUs may require assessment tests in math (ELM) and English (EPT) if the student has not received certain scores on the ACT, SAT, or AP English and math tests. The CSU will send students more information about this requirement.

NOTE: CSUs do not require teacher recommendations, school reports, mid-year reports, essays, or personal interviews.

UC Application Process

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The UC system has its own application, which must be completed online at the UC admissions website, <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/apply-online/>.

You need submit only one application and check off each UC campus to which you wish to apply. A fee is charged for each campus. Payment is made by credit or debit card.

You will need to write essays for the UC application, in response to the listed essay prompts. See Chapter 2 of this handbook for more information on writing college essays.

After the application is submitted, it is important to print out and save the confirmation of the application's receipt, along with a copy of the application.

When completing the UC application, you will need an unofficial transcript to self-report grades up to this point.

NOTE: UCs do not offer personal interviews and will not accept other supplemental information (including letters of recommendation) unless they specifically request it of you.

Be aware that the UCs do not accept deferrals to another year. If you are accepted, you may not take a "gap" year without reapplying.

Timing

The application is available online after August 1 and must be submitted between November 1 and November 30. If you are unable to apply online, see your College Advisor.

Fees

The application fee is \$70 for each UC campus to which you apply.

UC offers a fee waiver program for students whose family income and size fall within specific guidelines. The fee waiver program is limited to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and applicants eligible for AB540 benefits. Students can apply automatically for a fee waiver using the online application.

Getting Help

For help filling out the UC application, you can attend one of the UC workshops offered through the College & Career Center. Dates are listed on the BHS e-Tree in the *College & Career*

Center Bulletin and in the *Daily Bulletin*. The College & Career Center also has essay readers available to help you with essay writing and review.

SENDING SAT OR ACT SCORES

You must send your SAT or ACT scores to the UCs; this is not automatically done.

The UC system requires students take either the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT Plus Writing by December of the senior year.

If you choose to take SAT Subject Tests, the last test date the UC system will accept is December.

If you are applying to more than one UC campus, you do not need to have the testing agency send multiple scores: you can send scores to one UC campus only, and scores will automatically be sent to the other UC campuses to which you applied. If you indicated a UC campus on the test form when you took the test, your scores will be sent for free; otherwise, sending scores requires a fee. To send your scores and determine your costs, visit the appropriate website below:

For ACT scores: <http://www.actstudent.org/scores/>

For SAT Reasoning Test scores and SAT Subject Test scores:
<https://sat.collegeboard.org/scores>

HOUSING

UC housing is determined only after admission.

NOTE: UCs do not offer personal interviews and will not accept teacher recommendations or other supplemental information.

Community College Application Process

APPLYING ONLINE

Go online to <http://home.cccapply.org/apply> to set up a CCCApply account and choose a password.

You can then apply to the specific community college. There is no application fee. Applications are available in the spring, when special sessions in the College & Career Center will allow students to get help in completing their registration. Some community colleges (such as Berkeley City College) hold special sessions to explain their programs to prospective students. If you have questions, see your College Advisor.

After submitting an application electronically, it is important to print out and save the confirmation that the application was received. Keep a copy of the application.

HOUSING

Some community colleges offer dormitory housing. Visit a college's website for information on applying for housing.

BEGINNING SCHOOL

Assessment Tests

Students applying to community colleges must take English and math assessment tests (often called "placement tests") before registering for classes. The tests are used to determine what level English and math classes a student is ready to take. Check each college's website for the specific testing requirements and when assessment tests are offered.

Orientation

Most community colleges require that students attend an orientation (some offer orientations online while other colleges require students to attend in person).

Registering for Classes

Students should make an appointment to see a counselor at the community college. Many colleges require it. The counselors assist students with establishing an academic plan.

If you want to transfer to a four-year college later, make sure the classes you sign up for are transferable.

Private and Out-of-State Application Process

THE EARLY DECISION OPTION

Some private colleges offer students the opportunity to receive early notice of application acceptance. All deadlines for this option are usually earlier as well. See the appendix for more information on this option.

COMPLETING THE SENIOR PROFILE

The Senior Profile is a Berkeley High form that all seniors are expected to complete to help academic counselors complete the Counselor Recommendation (Secondary School Report) for private colleges and scholarships. By thoroughly completing the Senior Profile, students create a record of their achievements and experience during their high school years. A detailed Senior Profile can also help the student stay focused and consistent when filling out applications.

The Senior Profile form will be available on the College & Career Center website (<http://bhs.berkeleyschools.net/resources/college-career-center/>) in early June and should be filled out and submitted electronically. Remember to save your filled out form to a Word document for your records.

The Senior Profile is due to the College & Career Center the beginning of September for early decision applicants and mid September for regular admission applicants. Listen to morning announcements or check in the College & Career Center for exact dates.

Allow yourself ample time to do a thorough job.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

For private colleges, students use the application provided on the college's website or the Common Application (Common App). There is also a new application from the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success (CAAS) called the Coalition Application (Coalition App), which some colleges will begin to use in the 2017/18 admission cycle.

The Common Application

The Common App is an online service that allows students to apply to multiple colleges by submitting one application. Because it is a "smart" application, it will guide you to answer only the questions that pertain to you. The Common App includes electronic services to submit transcripts, counselor recommendation, and teacher recommendations to Common App schools.

To use the Common App website,

Go to the website www.commonapp.org. Create an account and record your Username and Password in a safe place.

In your account, you will see tabs for "Dashboard," "My Colleges," "Common Application," and "College Search." In the "College Search" section, add the colleges to which you want to apply. The "Dashboard" will then display the work to be done for each college. The supplements for each college will be found under the "My Colleges" tab. You must first complete the "Questions" section before being able to access the supplements so that the supplements will be tailored to your interests.

The "Common Application" tab will take you to the application.

NOTE: Some colleges have chosen to keep their supplements in the "Questions" section. However, if the writing supplement is separate, this means it is to be submitted after you have submitted the Common Application. Be sure to remember to submit it once it is completed.

After you have completed the Common App, it is important to print out and save the confirmation of the application's receipt along with a copy of the application.

The Common App and supplements are available online beginning August 1. Rather than waiting until the last minute to apply, start early to learn how to use the site and to see what each college wants. In particular, check the "My Colleges" and "Dashboard" sections to see if supplements are required for each college.

The Coalition Application

This new format in applications is designed to allow students to collect, through the locker feature, work they have done throughout their academic career. The locker collects academic

work, extracurricular milestones, creative pieces, etc. Once an item is in the locker, students can enlist a mentor to comment on those items and ultimately choose which items in the locker they want to share with each college to which they apply.

Many schools that accept this application also accept the Common Application. However, there are a few colleges that accept only this application. Be sure to check the website of the school to which you are applying. For detailed information on the Coalition Application, including a list of schools that accept it, see <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org>.

For Colleges That Don't Use the Common Application

Check the college's website for the required application forms. After completion, it is vital to keep a copy of the entire application for your records. If you choose to submit a paper application by mail, get a Certificate of Mailing from the post office. Do not use certified mail.

Fees

Independent school application fees vary, the average being \$41, with many schools charging between \$60 and \$70. A few (highly selective schools) charge as much as \$80 or \$90.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher recommendations (also called Teacher Evaluations) are required by many private colleges. After you complete the "Recommenders and FERPA section" on the Common Application, you will be able to see how many teacher recommendations are required as well as how many you are allowed to submit. You will also see whether other recommenders are allowed and how many.

Asking for a Recommendation

You may need one or more recommendations. Consider getting one from a humanities teacher and one from a math or science teacher from your junior or senior year. Teachers will emphasize the student's academic performance, so try to choose a teacher who knows your academic work well.

Before they write a recommendation, some teachers require that students respond to a series of questions developed by the teacher. You should leave enough time to answer these questions thoughtfully.

If a teacher doesn't have a list of questions, it may be useful for you to write a detailed note to the teacher, including your accomplishments in the teacher's class, contributions you have made, and examples of some of your best work in the class. This helps teachers remember the details of your work in class.

Timing

Confirm which teachers you plan to request recommendations from by the end of your junior year or as early as possible your senior year. Popular teachers get many requests and often limit the number of recommendations they will write each admissions cycle.

Give teachers the requests for recommendations at least one month before the first recommendation is due. For many colleges, this means teachers need to have the recommendation forms by **November 15** so they can complete them before winter break. Students applying Early Decision or Early Action should make this request in **September**.

Submitting the Recommendation

Teachers can choose to submit recommendations online or on paper. Determine which method each teacher prefers. If a college is not part of the Common Application and does not have an online option, then download the recommendation form from the college website (see below for details) and give this to your teacher.

If your teacher wants to submit online:

Confirm the teacher's e-mail address.

For the Common App or for individual colleges, follow the directions for online submission of teacher recommendations.

If your teacher wants to submit a paper recommendation:

For Common App schools, follow the online Common App instructions.

For individual colleges not on the Common App, download the form from the college's website. Complete the student section and sign as required. Paper-clip this form to an envelope (#10 business size) with the college's Admissions Office address on it, but leave the return address space for the teacher to add his or her return address. Do NOT put your own return address there. Put postage on the envelope.

For each teacher who wants to fill out the recommendation form on paper instead of online, make a packet for the teacher that includes:

Information requested by the teacher, or a note to the teacher, listing some of your accomplishments in the teacher's class.

Teacher recommendation forms and stamped envelopes, paper-clipped and placed in a large manila envelope

On the front of each teacher's manila envelope, attach a sheet listing each college the teacher will be sending recommendations to and the due dates, starting with the college with the earliest due date. Note on this sheet anything specific you want a teacher to mention in the recommendation for a particular school.

Additional Recommendations

Note that once you log into your Common App account, there is the option for submitting recommendations from community members as well as from teachers. Choosing additional recommenders can enhance your application to specific programs or schools.

Follow Up

You can check your Common App account to see if teacher recommendations have been received. It is your responsibility to follow up with teachers to be sure they have completed the recommendations.

It is a good idea to write each teacher a thank-you note within two weeks of giving them the recommendation packet.

COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Counselor Recommendation (also known as the Secondary School Report) is a recommendation written by your high school Academic Counselor or your College Advisor and is sent to the college with your transcript. Each Academic Counselor uses the Senior Profile to fill in the required information and write a letter for the student.

If your college uses the Common Application

Follow the website directions on how to submit your school report.

If the college does not use the Common Application

If no counselor recommendation is required, send a transcript by completing and signing a “Transcript Request Form.”

If a counselor recommendation is required, download the required form from the college website.

Complete and sign a “Transcript Request Form” (available from the Registrar in D173). If you are under 18, your parent or guardian must sign.

Paper-clip the Transcript Request Form and the college’s form to a large manila envelope addressed to the college, with the Berkeley High School address as the return address. Put on \$1.32 in postage (that is the large envelope 3 oz. rate).

Paper-clip the *College Application Checklist* (available at the College & Career Center) on top.

Turn in envelopes to the College & Career Center by the following dates:

Early Decision/Early Action: October 5

Regular admission: November 2

TRANSCRIPTS

If your college uses the Common Application

Follow the website directions on how to submit your school report.

If the college does not use the Common Application:

Complete and sign a “Transcript Request Form” (available from the Registrar in D173) for each college. If you are under 18, it must be signed by your parent or guardian.

Clip each transcript request form to a stamped business-size envelope addressed to the college with Berkeley High School as the return address. Clip all forms and envelopes together.

If your college requires a Counselor Recommendation, include this form with your Counselor Recommendation request.

Mid-year Reports

Mid-year Reports are the first semester senior grades, which some colleges require.

For schools on the Common App, these will automatically be sent by BHS.

If you are applying to a school not on the Common App, download the Mid-year Report from the college's website and submit it by early January to the Registrar in room D173 with a stamped business-size envelope addressed to the school.

SENDING SAT OR ACT TEST SCORES

It is **your** responsibility to send test scores to each of the colleges that require them. The request to send test scores needs to be made through the appropriate website:

For ACT scores: <http://www.actstudent.org/scores/>

For SAT Reasoning Test scores and SAT Subject Test scores:
<https://sat.collegeboard.org/scores>

SENDING ARTS OR ATHLETICS SUPPLEMENTS IF REQUIRED

Many colleges require supplements. To find out which ones are required, look at the college's website.

Note that college-specific supplements are carefully reviewed by admissions officers.

COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

College interviews are conducted primarily by private colleges. An interview is a two-way street. Students can use this opportunity to gather information about a college as well as to give the college representative a sense of who they are. Interviews generally cannot hurt a student and can often help. More information on interview policies can be found at individual college websites.

Campus Visit Interviews

Contact the college early and ask about their interview policy. Request interviews in advance. Some colleges require students to sign up by December 1.

Local Interviews

Some colleges send admissions representatives to areas with the specific purpose of interviewing candidates.

If a college representative is coming to visit Berkeley High, ask ahead of time about the possibility of setting up an interview while the representative is in Berkeley.

Colleges from other parts of the country may have area admissions representatives who live in the West and are available for interviews.

Some colleges use alumni interviewers. Generally, the interviewer will call or email the student to set up the interview, but you may be asked to contact the interviewer directly. These interviews are generally very informal and can vary widely depending on the person doing the interview.

INCREASING YOUR CHANCES

There is evidence that some private colleges deny admission to or wait list applicants with very strong academic and personal achievements but no demonstrated interest in their school, preferring to admit applicants who show real interest over those with more stellar records. Colleges want to admit students who will choose to enroll. You can demonstrate interest by:

Visiting the college if possible. Be sure to sign in at the admissions office so the office will have a record of your visit.

Having an on-campus staff or off-campus alumni interview if the school offers it. Note that some colleges require students to sign up for an interview by December 1.

Attending the college's presentation at BHS and filling out an interest card.

Attending the college's information reception if they hold one in the Bay Area and filling out an interest card.

Writing or emailing the college, inquiring about relevant programs or activities.

CHAPTER 2

COLLEGE ESSAYS



Most colleges and universities require applicants to write one or more essays as part of the admissions process.

Sometimes referred to as a *personal statement*, these essays are written in response to a *prompt*, which either poses a question or topic.

Different College Requirements

The UC system currently requires students write four short essays.

CSUs and community colleges do not require applicants to write an essay as part of the application.

Colleges that are part of the Common Application or Coalition Application may require additional essays called *supplements*.

Timing

It is a good idea to begin writing essays during the summer between junior and senior year, but if you haven't gotten started, now's the time!

Prompts for supplemental essays on the Common Application should be available by August 1.

What Colleges Are Looking For

The point of a college essay is to give colleges a picture of who you are beyond GPA, test scores, and activities lists. They are not looking for your life story or a recounting of activities but a view into what makes you unique. They are interested in narratives that demonstrate qualities such as curiosity, intellect, self-motivation, tenacity, creativity, kindness, leadership, and empathy. While they are reading essays, admissions representatives will likely be asking themselves, "Is this a person I would like to meet?"

Getting Started

Think about small moments that made a big difference in your life. This does not need to be huge or exotic but should be unique to you.

Consider:

- What are you passionate about?

- Which experiences in your life are unique? These do not need to be unusual or extraordinary and may include work experiences, family responsibilities, or volunteer activities.
- Which experiences could make a good story?

Focus on the “why” rather than the “what.” For example, rather than recounting that service trip, focus on one moment in that trip that made a difference and explain why. “Showing” rather than “telling” will make the essay more powerful.

Help with Your Essay

The College & Career Center has terrific resources to helping with this essay, including trained essay readers who will help you brainstorm, revise, and finalize your essay. They are available in the College & Career Center starting September 11 on the following schedule:

Monday, 9:00–10:00 a.m, lunch, after school

Tuesday–Thursday, lunch and after school

Friday, lunch

The College & Career Center also publishes *The Berkeley Book of College Essays*, which is a collection of college essays for the Common App and the University of California written by BHS seniors. It may be purchased in the College & Career Center or at the main front desk for \$15.

Also visit the College & Career Center’s Facebook group Berkeley High College Essays for tips and links to online resources.

The UC admissions website offers tips for writing the personal statement (click on “How to Apply,” then on “Personal Statement”).

UC Essays

Personal Insight Questions

What do you want UC to know about you? Here's your chance to tell us in your own words.

DIRECTIONS

- You will have 8 questions to choose from. You must respond to only 4 of the 8 questions.
- Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words.
- Which questions you choose to answer is entirely up to you, but you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances.

TO KEEP IN MIND

- All questions are equal: All are given equal consideration in the application review process, which means there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others.
 - There is no right or wrong way to answer these questions: It's about our getting to know your personality, background, interests, and achievements in your own unique voice.
1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.
 2. Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.
 3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
 4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.
 5. Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?
 6. Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.
 7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
 8. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?

For additional guidance on approaching the questions, see
<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/freshman/index.html>

Common Application Essays

From the 2017–2018 Common Application.

The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. (The application won't accept a response of shorter than 250 words.)

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.

Coalition Application Essays

The essay prompts for the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success can be found at <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/essays.html> and below. Different colleges using the Coalition App may require one or more of these essays, but may also require their own supplement questions or essays instead, or in addition. Check the requirements on each school's web site. The Coalition recommends concise, straightforward writing for application essays, and a length of 300-550 words (see the website above for further instructions).

1. Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.
2. Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.
3. Has there been a time when you've had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your beliefs?
4. What is the hardest part of being a teenager now? What's the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend (assuming they would listen to you)?
5. Submit an essay on a topic of your choice

CHAPTER 3

COLLEGE COST AND FINANCIAL AID



The best way to figure out how much a particular college will cost you and your family, after financial aid, is to use the Net Price Calculator on colleges' web sites (search for the name of the college and the words "net price calculator," or see the link from CollegeNavigator.gov). The calculator will ask you to answer a few key questions and then give you an estimate of your costs and financial aid. As described in chapter 2, after grant aid many students with up to nearly \$100,000 family income end up paying no tuition at all, and some receive grant aid to cover other expenses as well.

While some of your financial aid will likely come from the federal or state government, the full "package" of aid will be different for each college. Usually financial aid varies based on your need—your family's financial circumstances—but sometimes, especially at private college and out-of-state universities, aid may be offered because of grades or test scores. (Some private colleges offer scholarship to nearly every accepted applicant as an encouragement to enroll.)

For UC, CSU, and the community colleges, the financial aid form you need to complete is the FAFSA, which is the federal government's online form and is free (www.fafsa.gov). Many private colleges also require the CSS PROFILE, which asks for more information and has an application fee.

The "Cost" of College

Some of the costs of college are precise, such as tuition and fees. Other costs, like food, are estimates. Without any financial aid, the total **Cost of Attendance** for a college is determined by adding up the following:

1. Tuition/fees
2. Room and food at school (actual dormitory charges, or an estimate for living in an apartment)
3. Books and supplies (estimated)
4. Personal expenses (estimated)
5. Transportation, including travel home at least twice a year (estimated)

These are the estimated costs for *one year* of college. You will find this total listed in the school's catalog and on their website (usually in the financial aid section). If a particular college is far from Berkeley, be sure to include, as part of the cost, round-trip airfare for visits home.

You can also find college costs at www.collegeboard.org. Use the “Search by College Name” box or the “College Quickfinder.” Type in the college name and click on “Find,” then click on “Paying” to get the total cost for each school. These totals often exclude transportation expenses.

College costs vary widely, from very expensive private schools to inexpensive community colleges. To get an idea of the range, listed below are the costs of attendance estimated for 2017–2018 (excluding transportation) for students living on campus at a selection of schools. Because of financial aid, **most students do not pay the full price**; use the college’s Net Price Calculator for an estimate of the costs for you.

Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.)	\$72,496
Amherst College (Massachusetts)	73,250
Emory University (Georgia)	66,950
Macalester College (Minnesota)	64,136
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (out-of-state students; for freshman or sophomore year, and varies by major; cost is higher for junior or senior year)	62,176
Arizona State University (out-of-state students)	45,071
UC Santa Cruz*	36,159
UC San Diego*	30,450
San Diego State University*	28,224
San Francisco State University*	26,720

* California residents

COMMUNITY COLLEGE COSTS

For a community college, the tuition/fees are around \$1,380/year; books and supplies add another \$1,530/year. The room, food and transportation costs will vary if you will be living away from home. If you live with relatives instead of living on-campus, the cost of attendance will be reduced. For example, the estimated cost of attendance (excluding transportation) at UC Berkeley would drop from \$32,916 to \$22,480.

Determining “Need”

Your need is a comparison of the cost (above) with a calculation of your ability to pay (known as the Expected Family Contribution, or EFC). The EFC is determined by assuming that after a certain amount of your family’s income and savings are protected, a portion of the amounts above those levels can be made available to pay for college. Even with a high EFC, you remain eligible for some federal student loans, and colleges may still offer other aid. The aid you will get will be different for every college.

For California’s public universities and community colleges, you only need complete the FAFSA. Some private and out-of-state universities insist on a more rigorous examination of your financial situation, through the College Board’s CSS PROFILE. Below are examples of how components of these formulas for determining “need” are different.

Formula Component	FAFSA (UC, CSU, CCs)	CSS PROFILE (many private colleges)
Value of family home (net)	Ignored	Considered a resource (usually capped)
Asset value of small family business	Ignored	Considered a resource
Minimum student contribution	None	Included
Treatment of divorced (non-custodial) parent’s income	Ignored	Included
Treatment of multiple children in college	Equal split of parent contribution	Smaller reduction in parent contribution
Adjustment for high cost of living in Berkeley	No	Yes
Application becomes available	January 1	October 1

If you in interested in more detail about the formulas behind the EFC and need calculations, see the book, *Filing the FAFSA*, available on the College & Career Center website.

Types of Assistance

GIFT AID

Gift aid—such as Pell Grants, Cal Grants, and various types of scholarships—is great if you can get it, since it essentially reduces the price of college. This type of aid does not need to be paid back.

LOANS

Federal loans (Stafford and Perkins) have low interest rates and come with helpful protections that allow you to repay based on your future income. The “subsidized” version (available if they are covering determined need) do not charge interest during college.

Federal loans for parents (PLUS loans) can be a good option, but be aware that they do not come with the option of repaying based on income, so your parents should make sure they will be able to afford the payments. Note that if your parents do not qualify for PLUS (for example, if they defaulted on other loans), you will qualify for additional Stafford loans.

You should avoid taking out private loans (loans not from the federal government or a credit union) to pay for college. They usually have high interest rates and lack the protections that come with federal loans. Most of the horror stories you have heard about student debt have involved students who took out private loans. If your parents have access to a line of credit with a low interest rate (such as a home equity loan), it may be worth considering. Additionally, some credit unions offer affordable terms for student loans.

WORK-STUDY FUNDING

Colleges may also offer a “work-study” opportunity, a part-time job that helps you earn money to cover your expenses. These jobs are on campus, such as working in the library or cafeteria, or nearby doing community service, such as tutoring at a nearby elementary school. Whether or not you have been awarded work-study, a part-time job can be a good option for you as long as it does not interfere with your school work or participation in college activities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Even after the aid, there are expenses I will need to cover. How will I do that?

Don't worry too much about that until you actually figure out which colleges you get into and what types of financial aid they offer. Frequently they may help with part-time work during college, as well as federal student loans that come with low interest rates and protections in case you have difficulty repaying. When you choose which college to attend, you should avoid those that expect you to take out more expensive loans.

What about private scholarships?

Although they generally provide a small fraction of financial aid, there are scholarships that are available to help pay for college, in addition to the ones that a college offers you. On web sites like www.collegeboard.org you can run a customized search that may find scholarships aimed at your special skills, background, academic interests, and extracurricular activities. Also see the College & Career Center's active file of local scholarships. If you are already receiving other aid, be sure to find out how additional scholarships will affect your other aid. Some schools simply subtract the amount of the private scholarship from the aid they offer.

What if I or my parents are undocumented immigrants?

If your parents are undocumented but you are a U.S. citizen, you are treated the same as any other Californian. If you are undocumented, then you will not be eligible for federal aid, but you can still qualify as a California resident (paying in-state tuition) as well as for state financial aid. For more information see the California Dream Act web site at http://www.csac.ca.gov/dream_act.asp. Also, the College & Career Center can help you figure out how best to handle your situation.

My financial situation is complicated—where can I get more detailed information about calculation of financial aid?

You can call 1-800-4FED-AID for free help with the FAFSA. There is also a detailed description of financial aid forms and methods of calculation, including step-by-step instructions for filling out the forms, available in the Princeton Review's book, *Paying for College Without Going Broke* by Kalman A. Chany (Random House). This book discusses in depth the items used in calculations for the federal financial aid formulas (FAFSA) compared to the formulas used by many private colleges (PROFILE), and offers useful information about special case situations and how specific assets (e.g., trusts, farms) are evaluated.

IMPORTANT: There is no reason to pay for a scholarship search service when the same information is available free on the Internet or in the College & Career Center.

Completing Financial Aid Forms Step-by-Step

The advantages to completing the FAFSA electronically (www.fafsa.ed.gov) are: 1) there are built-in edits to minimize errors and a faster processing time—days, compared to weeks for the paper version; 2) you can more easily edit the final form if your tax information changes; and 3) you can list up to 10 colleges (only 4 can be listed on the paper form). If you must use paper, you can get a copy of the paper application from the FAFSA website.

1. GETTING STARTED

- Get FAFSA IDs for yourself and your parent (required to submit the FAFSA online), at fsaid.ed.gov. Keep a record of your IDs.
- Financial aid forms will be available early this year, starting October 1. They will use income information from the tax forms your family has probably already filed (the 2016 calendar year), which makes the whole process easier.
- The FAFSA web site allows you to import information from your IRS tax forms, or you can manually input the information from a copy of your tax form. Other than that, you may need to have information about the balances in bank accounts and investment accounts (not including retirement accounts).
- For help with financial aid, attend the Cash for College: FAFSA Workshop for Parents/Guardians of Seniors on January 12, 2017, at 5:30-8:30 in the BHS Library and CCC. Look for announcements on the BHS e-Tree, or check the CCC calendar to confirm the date and time.

2. GATHERING INFORMATION

- At the FAFSA website, you can find detailed information on what financial records you will need to gather in order to complete the form.
- Those whose family situations are complicated may find it helpful to consult books that take the reader step-by-step through the FAFSA, call FAFSA directly to ask questions (1-800-4FED-AID), or consult a financial aid specialist.
- The FAFSA will collect income and other information from a student's legal parents **who are living together**, regardless of the parents' marital status or gender. More information about this new policy is available on the FAFSA website.

3. TIMING/DEADLINES

- Go ahead and start the form any time after October 1. You can get started, save what you have done, and return later.
- Many colleges require that you complete the form by February 1, 2017 or earlier to increase your chances of receiving an official offer of aid in time for it to be part of your decision about which college to attend. To be eligible for a Cal Grant or aid from UC or CSU, the FAFSA must be completed by March 2, 2017. It is best to file the FAFSA electronically. If you mail a paper version of the FAFSA, be sure to obtain a certificate of mailing from the post office and keep a copy for yourself.
- It is important to meet the **earliest** financial aid deadline of the colleges to which you are applying. That is more important than having the exact, correct figures since the figures can be corrected later in the process.

4. SENDING TO MULTIPLE COLLEGES

- The FAFSA allows you to send your information to up to ten colleges. If you want the information sent to additional colleges, after the first submission has been processed (you will receive an email about the SAR), go back to the FAFSA and delete enough schools so you can add your additional schools, and submit the modification. Be sure to keep at least one California college on the FAFSA each time so that your information will be sent to the Cal Grant agency.

5. AFTER FILING

- **Obtain your copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR).** If you submitted the FAFSA electronically, you will be sent an email a few days later, giving you a web-based link to the SAR. This will allow you to make corrections quickly. If you submitted by mail, you should expect to receive a paper copy of the SAR three to four weeks later.

Your confirmation page will list your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) without a dollar sign. EFC=08920 means that your Expected Family Contribution was judged to be \$8,920.

Check over the SAR carefully. Errors do happen. Revise any errors immediately and send the corrected information back either electronically (the preferred method) or by mail.

If the report indicates that your form can't be processed, get back to them as soon as possible to find out why.

- Submit documentation of your financial information, if asked. Some FAFSA applications are selected at random for verification, and others are chosen for verification because of inconsistent information. If selected, you must submit the documents requested to each college to which you are applying. You may be asked for documentation of income or assets. Note the date that information is due and follow the procedure required by the college requesting the verification. Many schools use the Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC) of the College Board for collection of documents.
- You will need to fill out a FAFSA each year you apply for financial aid. To make the process easier the following year, print out a copy of the completed FAFSA and save it, along with the parent's and student's IDs. Keep them in a place where you can find them the following January.

Applying for Cal Grants A and B

If you are applying for financial aid to any public or private *California* college or university, be sure to:

- File your FAFSA by the due date.
- List the most expensive California college or university first on the FAFSA under Step 5.

The BHS Registrar’s Office will automatically send all students’ information to Cal Grant for consideration.

Completing the CSS PROFILE (for private colleges)

For private colleges, check with each one to see if you need to fill out the CSS PROFILE in addition to the FAFSA.

- The CSS PROFILE registration form is available from www.collegeboard.org. To complete the PROFILE, you must register and pay a fee. There is an additional charge for sending the report to each college that requires it. Registration for and completion of the PROFILE must be done online, beginning on October 1, 2017. Register for the PROFILE after you have decided which private colleges you will apply to. You will be informed if any of those colleges require completion of additional forms (such as the Noncustodial Parent’s Statement), which can be downloaded from the website. After you fill out the PROFILE, you will be notified if you are eligible for a fee waiver.
- Check the due dates; for some schools, the required PROFILE information must be submitted by December.
- If you are applying for any Early Decision programs, find out when forms must be submitted.
- If you need to update information later, send the update directly to each college.
- Keep a copy of the CSS PROFILE; it will be useful if you have to complete it the following year.

Completing Supplemental Financial Aid Forms

Check with each private college you apply to, to see if additional forms or documents are required and to find out their deadlines (some colleges require all financial aid applicants to send copies of income tax returns).

Financial Aid Timeline

October	Submit the FAFSA (and CSS PROFILE if applying to private colleges) as soon as October 1 if possible.
	If your family situation is complicated, talk with all family

	<p>members (step-parents, divorced partners) about their commitment to submit the required financial information for the FAFSA and PROFILE. If your family's finances are complicated (for example, involving partnerships or trusts), consider consulting a tax advisor.</p>
	<p>Choose at least one "financial safe-bet school."</p>
	<p>If you are applying Early Decision and need financial aid, find out what type of financial aid forms the college wants you to submit and when.</p>
	<p>Check if colleges have early deadlines for submitting scholarship applications, whether based on merit or financial need, and what is required.</p>
November	<p>Attend Financial Aid Information Night. Discuss the details of college financing with your parents.</p>
	<p>Check private colleges to see if they have additional financial aid forms.</p>
	<p>Check the Student Aid Report (SAR) for your Expected Family Contribution and to make sure there are no errors on your FAFSA.</p>
April	<p>Colleges will be sending acceptances and financial aid offers. To evaluate financial aid offers, consult Chapter 5.</p>

CHAPTER 4

EARLY, DEFERRED, AND OTHER TYPES OF APPLICATION



While UC and CSU have one admissions application deadline, many private colleges offer both early and regular admission, and some having rolling admissions. In addition, some colleges may offer applicants deferred admission. A good way to get this information for individual colleges is by looking at their websites or at www.collegeboard.org.

Some believe that applying early can increase one's chances of admission; however, this is not always true, and is not by itself a good reason to apply early.

Early Decision

Early Decision is an option if you have determined a first-choice college early in the fall of your senior year. Early Decision is a commitment on the part of both the applicant and the college. You are agreeing to attend that college if accepted.

You apply Early Decision *only* to one college by its Early Decision deadline, usually in early November. It is okay to also apply to UCs, CSUs, and other colleges with regular application deadlines, but these applications must be withdrawn if you are accepted to the Early Decision school.

Applying early is a complex process and your chances of being admitted early versus regular admission can vary enormously from one college to another. Early admissions applicants have earlier deadlines for most of their college materials and must get teacher letters of recommendation submitted early. Be aware that the rules for Early Decision admission programs change from year to year and from college to college. To be certain, read the college's admissions website carefully or call the admissions office for clarification.

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo is the only California public school that offers an Early Decision option (application due October 31).

The following are other types of Early Decision application. See the website of the college in which you are interested to see which types(s) they offer.

Early Decision II—offered by a few colleges—has a second “early” application date, and decisions are given usually in February. This commitment, too, is binding.

Early Action has application deadlines and acceptance dates similar to Early Decision. However, an Early Action acceptance does not bind you to attend that college. The college commits to the applicant, but the applicant is free to apply elsewhere and may ultimately choose to go to another college.

Single Choice Early Action (sometimes called “Restrictive Early Action”) is a policy a few colleges follow, under which a student may apply Early Action but to only one school. Students who are not accepted Early Decision will either be rejected or deferred.

Advantages and disadvantages of early admission programs

Advantages

1. If accepted, you may only have to do the work of submitting one application.
2. The college application process can be much less stressful and difficult if you are accepted in the early admission round.
3. You must research options and clarify your decisions earlier.
4. You are required to be better organized early on.

Disadvantages

1. Regular admission allows you to compare financial aid packages and, perhaps in some cases, negotiate between schools. Early Decision does not allow for this opportunity.
2. Early Decision requires that you start the college search process earlier. This process can include visits to schools you are seriously considering. In addition, SAT or ACT tests, requests for teacher letters of recommendation, and school reports must be completed by very early in the senior year.
3. Students often mature a lot during their senior year and develop greater clarity about their priorities. This wisdom might help you make a better decision in April than you are prepared to make in November.
4. The process of choosing among schools to which you have been accepted may help you learn more about yourself and the priorities that are most important. Issues such as location and academic areas of interest may not come into focus until you have made this choice.

Deferred Admission or “Gap” Year

Deferment as a result of an Early Decision application means that your application will be reviewed again with the regular admission applications.

In addition, some colleges will defer admission to the winter or spring quarter or to the spring semester, rather than to the fall semester for which you originally applied. You should seriously consider this option. Many mistakenly feel insulted by such offers, but deferred admission is often a very good way to enroll at one's first-choice college.

There is another kind of deferring. This is when you choose to tell a college that you plan to take a year off before enrolling. This is also known as a "gap" year. Deferring is typically only done at private colleges, and you should look closely at the requirements that the college has for submitting a request for deferral. All UCs, CSUs and some other colleges will not allow a deferral and will require you to reapply the following year.

Rolling Admission

This means that applications are reviewed and acted upon as received. If you apply to a school with Rolling Admission during the fall, you may learn by January whether or not you are accepted and do not have to wait until the fixed notification dates (in March or April) used by most schools. Examples of schools with Rolling Admission are University of Wisconsin, University of Oregon, and University of Michigan.

***TIP:** First quarter grades are important, especially for Early Action/Decision*

For those students applying Early Action or Early Decision, more and more colleges are contacting high schools at mid-semester to ask for the student's most recent grades. Some seniors get off to a slow start at the beginning of the senior year. In addition, there are teachers who grade low at the beginning of the semester to motivate students to do better. Low quarter grades can have a negative effect on Early Action/Early Decision admissions. Related to this issue, if a student is 'wait-listed' to a college or is rejected and appeals the decision (particularly relevant at UCs), the college may ask for the third-quarter grade.

CHAPTER 5

MANAGING ADMISSIONS DECISIONS



In this chapter, you'll find information about managing the April admission decisions you will face.

Timing of Decisions

Most schools have an application deadline, a formal notification date, and a response deadline, usually in March or April. A good way to get this information for individual colleges is by looking at their websites or at www.collegeboard.org.

If you have not heard from a school by April 10, see your College Advisor, who can help find out what is happening with a particular college.

If the college is behind in its process and has not issued its decision letters, the College Advisor can help find out when the decisions will be sent.

If a college has already sent its decisions but you have not received yours, the College Advisor can help find out why.

Some schools use a **rolling admission**, which means that applications are reviewed and acted upon as received. Students who apply to a school with Rolling Admission during the fall may learn by January whether they are accepted and do not have to wait until the fixed notification date. Examples of schools with Rolling Admission are University of Wisconsin, University of Oregon, Dominican University of California, and University of Michigan.

Types of Admission

REGULAR ADMISSION STATUS

You're in. Congratulations! Be sure to send your acceptance (and deposit) to the school of your choice by May 1.

WAIT LIST STATUS

Send in your acceptance (and deposit) to your first choice school among those that accepted you. Recently, colleges have tended to wait list many but admit few students selected from their wait list. If you still wish to pursue admission to a school that placed you on their wait list, follow the directions they give you. If allowed, you may write a letter similar to the appeal letter

described in this chapter under If Your Application Is Denied. You should restate your strong interest in that college, provide any new information not in the original application, and include a Mid-year Report. If not already sent, you may also include additional letters of recommendation that highlight your strengths. Some schools will not accept any additional information. For

example, UC campuses admit students from their wait list in order on a space-available basis. UC campuses do not ask for, and likely will not consider, additional information.

Be aware that the chances of being admitted off a wait list are slim and that colleges that admit students regardless of financial need (called “need blind”) may not be able to meet full financial need for students who are admitted in this way. Check the financial aid offer carefully if you are offered admission from the wait list.

DEFERRED ADMISSION STATUS

If you have been offered deferred admission to the winter or spring quarter or to the spring semester, consider that option seriously. Many students mistakenly feel insulted by such offers, but deferred admission is often a very good way to enroll at one’s first-choice college simply by enduring a four- or five-month delay.

There is another type of deferring. This is when you choose to tell a college that you plan to take a year off before enrolling. This is known as a “gap” year. Deferring is typically only done at private colleges, and you should look closely at the requirements that the college has for submitting a request for deferral. All UCs, CSUs, and some other colleges do not allow deferral and will require you to reapply the following year.

THE TRANSFER OPTION

You might consider attempting to transfer to your first-choice college in one or two years. You can call the Admissions Office or look at the college website to see the requirements for transfer.

Deciding Among Multiple Admission Offers

The weeks between admission notification and the May 1 response deadline will go by quickly. The following may help you make your decision.

If possible, visit the various colleges in person—preferably when classes are in session so you can sit in on classes, eat on campus, talk with a variety of students, and possibly spend the night in a dorm. If you can’t visit the schools in person, revisit them electronically, looking at the school newspaper and checking out online student groups.

Review the college websites for general education requirements, major requirements, whether or not there are obstacles to declaring popular majors, and other topics.

Consider the freshman retention rates, percentage of students who graduate within four years, student loan default rates, and transfer rates. These can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>

Attend Bay Area receptions for students admitted to those schools.

As soon as you know for sure that you can definitely rule out a school that has admitted you, inform the school that you will not be attending.

Note that is unethical to submit a Statement of Intent to Register to more than one college. It can jeopardize admissions to both colleges.

If Your Application Is Denied

Keep perspective. Even though you may be disappointed, you will still have some solid options.

The first thing to do is to call or email the college and confirm that the application was complete. If it wasn't, immediately submit any missing items and ask that the application be reconsidered.

APPEALING THE DECISION

You may consider writing a letter of appeal, but know that chances of success are small. Check with the college to see if they accept appeals or have specific requirements for an appeal.

Your letter should describe the remarkable person the college would be getting if it decides to admit you on appeal. It should be straightforward and friendly, not angry, outraged, disappointed, or whiny. You may also want to include

- New information that was not in the original application, including any honors or awards gained since application

- Mid-year Report, including the first-semester senior year grades, if you have not already sent it

- Letters of recommendation from teachers, counselors, or peers if the college did not require them as part of the original application. Enclose these letters in envelopes with the writer's signature across the sealed flap and include them in the larger envelope with the letter of appeal.

The College Advisors are available to review the letter of appeal before you send it.

UC campuses provide specific information on their websites about how to submit appeals. Note that UC campuses that use wait lists are unlikely to grant appeals except in unusual circumstances. CSU does not accept appeals.

If You Were Not Admitted Anywhere

Make an appointment with your College Advisor to ask about the clearinghouse list from the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). NACAC puts together a list each spring of colleges that still have space available. You may find a college on that list that is right for you. Interested students then apply directly to each school, just as they would have in the fall.

You could also consider attending a community college and transferring to your first choice college after one or two years. Some four-year colleges and universities offer a transfer guarantee program in partnership with California community colleges. Check out the transfer requirements before signing up for classes. See Chapter 3 for more detail about transfer requirements from community colleges.

Comparing Financial Aid/Scholarship Offers

DETERMINE THE TYPE OF FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIP OFFER LETTERS RECEIVED

Official Award Letters tell students what they will actually receive.

Preliminary Offer Letters (sometimes called “Estimated,” “Tentative,” or “Unofficial” letters) are *estimates*. The actual amounts and types of money may change significantly from the Preliminary Offer Letter to the Official Award Letter.

If you can’t determine which type the letter is, contact the college financial aid office directly.

Ask specifically how much difference there has been in each of the past two years between their Preliminary Offer Letters and their Official Award Letters.

Ask when the Official Award Letters will be distributed.

DETERMINE WHAT EACH INSTITUTION WILL COST *IN TOTAL* FOR THE COMING ACADEMIC YEAR

The technical term for this amount is “Cost of Attendance.” It should include the following five items:

Tuition/fees

Room and food at school

Books and supplies

Personal expenses

Transportation (including travel home at least twice a year)

If any of the offer letters do not include all five of these items, you need to uncover the missing information (website, general catalog, direct inquiry) and factor it in. *It is critical to be sure that you are comparing the same costs across all of the colleges you are considering.* The College Advisor has a form to help you make the comparison.

COMPARE THE *NET COST* FOR EACH COLLEGE

The net cost is the cost of the college to you *after* the financial aid package offered. The financial aid package includes money that does not have to be repaid. Loans and work are part of the net cost to you.

This is not the same as the total amount of financial aid being offered—and certainly not the cost of attendance at each college.

As an example, say that a college’s Cost of Attendance is \$24,500 and the total amount of financial aid offered by that college is \$14,800 (\$7,700 in grants and scholarships, \$4,500 in Work-Study, and \$3,200 in loans).

If your Expected Family Contribution is \$9,200 for the parental contribution and \$900 for the student contribution, the net cost of this college would be \$17,800.

Work-Study	\$ 4,500
Loan	3,200
Parental Contribution	9,200
Student Contribution	900
Net cost	\$17,800

Once you have calculated the net cost of each college, you can make a true comparison. Useful websites for comparing net costs of colleges are www.salliemae.com/plan-for-college/college-planning-toolbox/ and www.collegeboard.org.

CONSIDER LOAN INDEBTEDNESS.

Consider how much debt you and your family are willing to incur by asking the following questions:

What will the loan indebtedness be at graduation? About half the students at public universities are currently taking out loans, and it is not unusual for them to graduate with as much as \$25,000 in loan indebtedness. This amount of debt may be higher at private colleges.

Are you planning to go to graduate or professional school and thus possibly incur further debt?

How much you will have to pay back monthly for student loan payments after graduation? This information is sent to students on a yearly basis. Consider how that number will add up for four years of loans.

CONSIDER AID POSSIBILITY PAST YOUR FIRST YEAR.

Ask if financial aid in subsequent years will contain the same mix of grant/scholarship and work/loan, assuming your family's financial circumstances remain roughly the same.

Some colleges award a great deal of grant/scholarship money and very little loan to incoming freshmen and then reverse those ratios in subsequent years. This practice, called "frontloading," can lead to much greater indebtedness at graduation than a family might project from the first-year financial aid offer. Also, if your family's financial circumstances improve in future years, your financial aid could be reduced.

CONSIDER NEGOTIATING YOUR FINANCIAL AID OFFER WITH A PARTICULAR COLLEGE.

It may help to speak with your BHS College Advisor for advice on this process.

If you decide to try to negotiate with a particular college, your tone and manner are critical. It is more effective to be low-key and courteous than aggressive and hard-edged. Some things to consider:

Some colleges invite comparison shopping and ask you to show them offers that you think are better from other colleges.

The mix of work-study versus loan is sometimes negotiable.

It is possible, but more difficult, to have the mix of grant/scholarship versus work-study/loan altered.

The Expected Family Contribution may be altered if your circumstances have changed. Such circumstances might include a parent's loss of a job, decreased pay, or high medical bills.

The total award will not be greater than your demonstrated financial need.

Be aware that some colleges cannot meet every family's full need. If an appeal of your financial aid package is not successful, you will need to look to other sources, such as private scholarships or loans, to help cover the cost of attendance.

Sending the Final Transcript

The college or university you choose to attend will require a copy of your final transcript.

All students will need to submit the final transcript request to the Registrar in D-173 no later than mid May. Final transcripts will be sent after graduation.

Note that the Common App calls this transcript the "Final Report."

IDs, Usernames, and Passwords

Use this space to record your ID, user name and password (if needed) for the FAFSA, colleges, and any other organizations that use them.

ORGANIZATION

ID

USER NAME

PASSWORD

URLs for Colleges and Other Relevant Websites
