

## Seniors' Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What factors are really important to get into a four year college or university?

- **High School Transcript:** Colleges want to know if you have challenged yourself academically throughout high school. Did you take the most rigorous courses that were offered? Do your grades demonstrate that you will be successful in college?
- **Class rank:** This helps colleges compare your record with other students in your class.
- **Test scores:** ACT and/or SAT scores are required ONLY for 4 year colleges. 2 year colleges do not require SAT and ACT scores.
- **Extracurricular activities:** Many colleges will consider these to see how a student will contribute to the college campus. These activities are NOT on your transcript, so make sure you are keeping track of everything you do outside of the classroom.
- **Others:** Essays, recommendations, and interviews: Every school's admission process is unique, but some take into consideration letters of recommendation, thoughtful essay responses and personal interviews.
- **Each college or university is different!** Make sure to take a look at the websites of the schools you are interested in to learn more about their individual admissions process.

### 2. Who should consider community college?

Community college can be a very realistic and affordable option for all kinds of students.

- Some students pursuing a 4 year bachelor's degree may decide to *begin their college program at a two year college*, and then transfer to a four year college to complete their degree. Tuition expenses are traditionally much less at community colleges, you may have the option to live at home to save money, and classes are sometimes smaller. All of the community colleges in NC have an articulation agreement with the public four year universities to simplify the process of transferring all courses with above a C average.
- Students looking for a *two year Associates in Applied Science degree (A.A.S) or other diploma programs* can also attend community college. These programs prepare you for immediate employment opportunities. Many jobs do not require a four year degree and a community college is often the best option for students pursuing those careers.
- The basic requirement for community college admission is a high school diploma – test scores and GPA are not taken into consideration.

### 3. What if I want to go into the military?

All branches of the military require, at minimum, a high school diploma for entry. You must also take the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery), which is offered multiple times throughout the year. For general information about military careers and military admissions, try talking to Commander Duclos or Master Gunnery Sergeant Marone, or contact a local recruiter at the information listed below:

US Marine Corps/ USMC Reserve:	Staff Sergeant Christopher Falk	(704) 283-9022
US Army / Army Reserve:	Sergeant Mieszala	(919) 673-2857
	Staff Sergeant Zumwalt	(704) 224-9615
US Navy / Navy Reserve:	Petty Officer Willetts	(704) 962-0377
US Air Force:	Staff Sergeant Christian Jawaan	(704) 412-0321
US Army National Guard:	Sergeant First Class John Benoit	(704) 654-8126

### 4. Where should I apply?

First, you need to decide what is important to you in a college or university. Do you want to go to large or small school? Close to home or further away? What do you want to study? Do you want to be in a city or a small town? After you narrow down the types of schools you are looking for, you can take a closer look at the

admission requirements to determine at which schools you are likely to get accepted. College websites are often the best source of up-to-date information.

#### **4 Year College Application Strategy:**

Due to the competitive nature of applying to 4 year colleges, students ideally should apply to ALL of the below:

1. **A DREAM school:** the student has a chance of getting admitted, but his/her grades / test scores / class rank may be slightly lower than admission standards.
2. **1-2 TARGET schools:** the student's grades/ test scores / class rank match admission standards.
3. **A SAFETY school:** the student exceeds admissions standards, they are highly likely to be accepted.

*Some helpful resources when choosing schools:*

- **Information catalogs and websites:** [www.cfnc.org](http://www.cfnc.org) and [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) have college matching services and lots of information about different colleges.
- **College Visits:** Visiting schools is an important part of the decision making process! Take advantage of teacher workdays, bank days and holidays to visit different schools.
- **Union County College Fair:** Union County hosts a College Fair each fall. It is normally on a Sunday afternoon in late September. Pay attention to the announcements for more information as it becomes available. This is a great opportunity to learn more about and ask questions of all different kinds of schools.
- **Lunch time visits by college representatives:** Throughout the year, representatives from different colleges will come to Forest Hills and set up information tables at lunch time. Pay attention to the announcements.

#### **5. What do I need to know about applications? When should I start?**

- You should start NOW!! If you need help narrowing down your choices see your counselor immediately. By mid-semester you should have applied to your top choice colleges.
- Four year colleges and universities: Your first choice applications should be in by October 1. All four year college applications should be done by Christmas break.
- Most colleges and universities prefer an online application – they are faster, more cost efficient and more readable.
- Most schools charge application fees of \$25 to \$75, which is why we recommend only applying to schools you are serious about and those which will be a good fit for you.
  - If you utilized SAT or ACT free waivers, you may be eligible for college application fee waivers. See your counselor for more details.
- CFNC will host a Free College Application Week November 2-6, 2015. During this week, you can apply FOR FREE to private colleges and universities (and select public universities) in North Carolina. DON'T WAIT UNTIL NOVEMBER TO APPLY TO YOUR FIRST CHOICE SCHOOL!
- Make sure you check your grammar and spelling before sending any applications! If an essay is required, do a rough draft first and check it carefully. Counselors are always available to read over essays or personal statements before you submit them.
- It is YOUR responsibility to send a complete application form, fees, test scores, recommendations, and any other required materials on time to the admission department of the college you are applying to.
- If there is a counselor form to be completed with your application, you need to submit that form and allow two weeks for them to be mailed to the college. **ALL counselor forms must be submitted to us at least two weeks before the college deadline.**
- If you have done a significant amount of community service, participated in athletics, clubs or groups you should have a **resume** outlining your activities, service, and leadership.
- If you are completing a paper application, you should always use black ink.
- It is very important to **be aware of deadlines** for applications, scholarships, and financial aid options.

6. **Transcripts:** You need to send an official transcript to each school to which you apply.
- To request a transcript, fill out a request form in the Counseling Office. There is a binder on the back counter of the office with request forms. See Mrs. Rivenbark in the Counseling Office for assistance.
  - The school will cover the cost of mailing the first three transcripts for each senior. Additional transcripts cost \$3.00 per request. Cash or check made out to Forest Hills High School can be given to Mrs. Rivenbark when you make your request.
  - Transcripts will be mailed directly to the college within two days of your request.
  - Transcripts for scholarships are always free.

7. **Who needs to take SAT and ACT tests and how do you sign up?**

Any student planning on applying to a four year college or university should take the SAT or ACT tests.

We recommend taking the SAT or ACT *at least* twice. Students tend to do better on one test than the other, so we recommend taking both and then taking the one on which you scored higher at least one more time. Scores tend to increase the second time. The earlier the better – seniors should take these tests in the FALL and not wait until the spring.

All students should have taken the ACT at school during their junior year. These scores are usable for college admissions.

Seniors can sign up for these tests at the websites listed below. You will be required to create an account and answer a set of demographic questions. You are also required to upload an appropriate photo.

**SAT and ACT scores do NOT get added to transcripts. You should request *an official score report* to be sent directly from College Board or ACT to the colleges to which you are applying.**

To sign up for the SAT: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

To sign up for the ACT: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

**2016-2017 test dates**

SAT		ACT	
<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Register by</u>	<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Register by</u>
October 1	September 1	September 10	August 7
November 5	October 7	October 22	September 16
December 3	November 3	December 10	November 4
January 21	December 21	February 11	January 13
March 11	February 10	April 8	March 3
May 6	April 7	June 10	May 5
June 3	May 7		

**\*\*Students who receive free or reduced lunch, or who qualify for other federally determined financial requirements, may receive fee waivers to take each test two times free of charge. These waivers also make you eligible for college application fee waivers. See your counselor for more information.\*\***

8. **What about financial aid and scholarships?**

- The **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Financial Aid) is the form that colleges and universities use to determine need for federal and state need-based financial aid. The FAFSA will become available on October 1, 2016; it is based on financial information from 2015. Check to see if the colleges you are applying to require any other financial aid forms.

- **Scholarships:** A scholarship newsletter is available every month with scholarship opportunities for students. It is posted on the school website, and hard copies are available in the Counseling Office. It will also be emailed to seniors each month. The scholarship newsletter is not an all-inclusive list! Check with each school to see what specific scholarship opportunities they offer.
- Announcements will be made about scholarships as they come in. Announcements will also be posted on the website. Seniors (and parents!) should pay close attention to the announcements to make sure that you hear all the scholarship updates.
- Some scholarships are determined by the school scholarship committee. If you want to be nominated for a specific scholarship, come to the Counseling Center and talk to Ms. Bimson.
- If you are interested in **athletic scholarships** to colleges or universities, you must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). Make sure to print off the Student Release of Information Form and bring it to the Counseling Center when you request a transcript.
- **REMEMBER: You should never have to pay money for scholarship opportunities. If you are asked to pay, it is most likely a scam.**

## 9. Do I need a resume?

If you are applying for employment or four year colleges, it is a good idea to have a resume. You should create your own resume showing your academic accomplishments, activities you have been involved in throughout high school, community service, leadership roles, and any other information you would like colleges or employers to know about you. Resumes should be typed and edited carefully for spelling and grammar. It is also helpful to give out your resume when asking someone to write you a letter of recommendation so that they are well informed of your accomplishments. If you'd like to look at an example resume or need help in writing yours, come see your counselor!

## 10. Who can help me if I have questions?

Your counselors are always available to help with questions about college admissions, testing, and financial aid. Our college adviser is also available to help with anything related to college research, admission, etc. Teachers and coaches can also be great resources. Make sure to take advantage of the admissions counselors at the colleges and universities, as well – they will have the best information on their specific school.