

# TOTAL COLLEGE PLANNING

The College Journal

October 2008



[www.totalcollegeplanning.com](http://www.totalcollegeplanning.com)

5521 RESEDA BLVD., SUITE 107

TARZANA, CA 91356

PHONE: (818) 774-9266

SACOLLEGE@AOL.COM

## October 2008

Review test materials & take PSAT either 10/15 or 10/18

### 4<sup>th</sup> – SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

### 25<sup>th</sup> – ACT and ACT plus Writing

Attend area college fairs and meetings

Meet with college reps visiting high school

Seniors - Continue work on applications; complete Early Decision/Early Action applications; complete "Profile" if required

Submit "rolling" admissions applications ASAP

## November 2008

### 1st – SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams

Seniors – File Early Decision/Early Action applications

Work on remaining college applications

Download a FAFSA or complete online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Register for a PIN

### 30<sup>th</sup> – Applications due for University of California colleges

## Presenting Your Best Application

Getting into your best colleges takes some time and effort, but since you're likely to spend four years there, it's well worth the investment.

While many students spend hours researching "dream" schools, they often add a "safety" school just to have a place they know they'll be accepted. At a time when competition for admission is intense and decisions can be somewhat arbitrary and unpredictable, it's important to find at least one "safety" school you really like.

Once you have a balanced list of colleges that would be great matches for you, the next step is convincing admissions officers at those schools that you're also a great match for them.

At private schools, especially those that are selective but not super-selective, it's important to demonstrate interest by visiting the college if possible, and attending local receptions or meeting admissions officers when they come to your high school. You can call or email the admissions officer assigned to your high school to ask questions about the college, as long as your questions go beyond "what majors do you offer," which you should already know from the college's website.

It's important to research the colleges so that you can make a strong case for your admission. Many students write a generic essay and modify it slightly for different colleges, but the more you personalize your application, the better. Putting in the effort to investigate each school is what will set your application apart.

Researching a school means going beyond a viewbook description of student life. Look through the catalog, which is available online, and see what courses you're excited about. If you love creative writing and

you're applying to the University of Pennsylvania, let them know you're excited about the Kelly Writers House. Start reading the school newspaper. Find out what research projects the professors in your major are involved in, and if one sounds fascinating, you might even contact the professor to see if there are opportunities for undergraduates to work on the project.

The application is your chance to come alive as a person. Admissions officers love to see intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm, self-confidence, and initiative. Likeability helps too, as they will be thinking about how you would interact with other students in the residence hall. Admissions officers are human, and the more real and open you can be in application, the better your chance of connecting with someone who'll advocate for you. This is especially important at colleges where admissions decisions are made by committee.

Parents need to resist the temptation to rewrite a child's application. Not only is it unethical, it will probably backfire, as admissions officers can spot an essay written by a 45-year-old. Students who take responsibility for their college applications feel more invested in the process and do a better job.

Parents can assist by serving as a sounding board, and helping a child look for common threads in the activities she's pursued. How do these activities illustrate her beliefs about herself and the world? Well-done applications take a student's experiences, interests, and goals and weave them together to illuminate the themes in her life.

While the college application process is often stressful and time-consuming, it is also an opportunity to learn how to present your best authentic self. That is a skill that will serve you well throughout your life.



## Focus on Careers: Aviation

As aviation remains an integral part of modern life, the industry offers a wide range of career opportunities for young people who love to fly. Apart from the obvious areas such as pilot careers, aircraft and systems maintenance, airline and airport operations, and law-related services, the industry also offers opportunities for those interested in communications, technology, engineering, science, and business law.

In years past, most *pilots* started their careers in the military. Today, however, pilots are likely to have earned a college degree and gotten their flight training from an FAA-certified civilian flight school. Increasingly, a college degree is an educational requirement for placement as an airline pilot. Pilots must make quick and accurate decisions under pressure, so airlines often require candidates to pass psychological and aptitude tests.

Although most pilots, copilots, and flight engineers work for airlines transporting passengers and cargo, about twenty percent are commercial pilots. These individuals may direct firefighting efforts, dust crops, track criminals, rescue the injured, monitor traffic,

### Other Aviation Careers

*Airport Directors* are responsible for the operation of the airport. They make and enforce airport rules and regulations, plan and supervise maintenance and safety programs, keep an eye on and plan to meet future needs, set up the airport budget, and negotiate leases to airport tenants such as airlines. To do this job, the airport director must have skills in a wide variety of fields such as public relations, business management, civil engineering, labor relations, politics, and economics.

The *Air Traffic Control Specialists* direct air traffic so it flows smoothly and efficiently. They provide taxiing and take-off instructions, and clear aircraft for flight. Throughout the flight, it is the air traffic controllers who provide information about upcoming flight conditions. They are also the ones who provide emergency flight assistance. Known as a high

or be employed as test pilots. Although their responsibilities may differ, all pilots receive the same basic training.

Larger aircraft may have three pilots on board. The most experienced, the *captain*, is in command and responsible for supervising all other crew members. The copilot, or *first officer*, shares flying, monitoring of instruments, and communication duties with the captain. The third pilot, or *flight engineer*, assists the other pilots. During an actual flight, the pilots are assisted by the autopilot and flight management computer to steer the plane along its planned route. Although most flights are routine, pilots must be alert and quick to react if something goes wrong.

Although the work may seem glamorous, airline pilots must contend with a variety of negative working conditions. Most spend a good deal of time away from home and their work schedules are generally irregular. Jet lag and its resulting fatigue are an occupational hazard. Commercial pilots face other hazards such as exposure to toxic chemicals, or personal injuries resulting from rescue work or employment as a test pilot.

stress job, air traffic controllers must be able to make carefully considered, but quick decisions under pressure.

*Aircraft manufacturing engineers* are responsible for developing, installing, and managing the complex systems that power an aircraft. Many manufacturing engineers work in the area of preventative maintenance, insuring the safe use of equipment. Increased use of robotics and automated flight systems has provided additional job opportunities in system design.

You can learn more about these careers at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov). The Federal Aviation Administration website at [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov) has a wealth of information about careers in aviation. You might also want to check out the resources available at [www.avaiationcareerguide.com](http://www.avaiationcareerguide.com) and [www.avscholars.com](http://www.avscholars.com).

*"The aviation industry offers opportunities for those interested in communications, technology, engineering, science, and business law."*

## Focus on Finances: Financial Aid Forms



Colleges employ a variety of financial aid forms to make decisions that lead to a distribution of available funds. With the high costs of college, it is important to submit all needed

forms by stated deadlines to get your share of aid.

The *FAFSA* (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the cornerstone on which all aid determinations are based. The FAFSA is completed online as soon as possible after Jan. 1st of the applicant's senior year of high school, and then again during each year of college. Although you can't complete the paperwork yet, it is a good idea to visit the FAFSA website at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) before Jan. 1st to obtain a PIN (needed for an electronic signature) and to learn about the documents and records you'll need in order to complete the FAFSA. You should complete the FAFSA even if you don't believe your family will qualify for need-based aid. Some colleges will not consider applicants for merit aid unless they have submitted the FAFSA. Apply each

year because financial circumstances may change. Many families find they become eligible for aid when a second or third child enters college.

Private colleges often have more money to distribute and may also require more financial information. Check to see if any of your colleges require the *CSS Profile*, a form provided by the College Board. You can see the list of Profile schools and also apply at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). This form is completed during the fall of senior year and is in addition to, not instead of, the FAFSA.

Some colleges utilize their own financial aid forms. Check carefully for all forms and filing dates required by each college on your final list. Colleges may also require students to submit their college application by an earlier date if they wish to be considered for either need-based or merit scholarships.

State funding also begins with the FAFSA form and may require additional paperwork. Check your individual state requirements if you are applying to either public or private in-state institutions.

## The Ins and Outs of the Common Application

Last year, nearly 1,400,000 applications were submitted using the Common Application. Use of the Common App (as it is known) has streamlined the college application process and simplified applying to multiple colleges that are members of the Common App group. Some of these accept the Common App in lieu of their own application; for others, the Common App is the only way to apply. The Common App allows users to input biographical and academic data, activities information, and essays and send the same information to as many of the 346 member colleges as desired. It's a good idea to resist the urge to apply to another college JUST because it's on the Common App – apply only to colleges that you have researched and in which you are truly interested.

The Common Application for fall 2009 has been available since the summer. Let's go through the steps of using the Common Application. Begin by visiting the Common App website at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and clicking on *member colleges*. Determine if any of your schools accept the common application – you will not be able to use this application for any colleges not on their list.

Next, create an account for yourself by clicking on the link in the APPLY! area. Next, go to *my colleges* and select one of your colleges so you can begin to complete the application. Answer all questions carefully and have some trusted adult proofread your application before you hit *submit*. Colleges with supplements to the common app may require you to complete the supplement before you can submit your application.

The essay part of the Common App should be written in *Word* and then cut and pasted into the space provided. Any required teacher recommendations or school reports can also be submitted on-line or may be mailed directly to each college by the recommender. Official transcripts must be sent by your high school and official test scores requested from the SAT and/or ACT programs.

Once you've completely submitted your first application, you can add an additional college to *my colleges*, and now tweak any portion of your responses to better fit this particular institution. After submitting your second application, repeat as needed for other common app colleges on your final list.

## Total College Planning

5521 Reseda Blvd.,  
Suite 107

Tarzana, CA 91356

Phone

(818) 774-9266

E-Mail

sacollege@aol.com

www.totalcollege

planning.com

## An Issue of Interest

For many selective colleges, the applicant's "demonstrated interest" becomes a "tip factor" in the admissions decision.

While showing real interest in a college will not gain admittance for an unqualified applicant, it can make the difference for the student who's right on the cusp of acceptance. In this highly competitive admissions environment, how can you demonstrate your genuine interest?

Visiting campus ranks as the highest expression of interest. Students who have spent time on campus generally have the best idea of fit, and are most likely to accept an offer of admission. The time to visit is before submitting your application; that way you can clearly describe why that college is right for you.

You may not be able to physically visit all of your targeted colleges, but you should make every effort to attend any information sessions they hold in your area. Some colleges offer regional sessions, sometimes as part of a group of colleges. Other colleges will pay a visit to your high school or a local college fair. Many colleges also offer alumni interviews in your area to give applicants another way of learning about their institution. Be sure to take advantage of these close-to-home opportunities to express your interest in that college.

Occasional e-mails with a well thought-out question, or an update on your recent achievements, sent to the admissions officer handling your application may also serve as a way to maintain contact and demonstrate continuing interest.

## Website of the Month: [www.cogito.org](http://www.cogito.org)

Cogito is the place for students passionate about math and science. At cogito you can read about topics ranging from global warming to bioethics to nanotechnology. Explore the connections between science and the arts, as seen in computer animation and science fiction. The site has great resources for science programs, in-

ternships, and competitions. You can even participate in online interviews with various experts, or join in a discussion forum with other interested students. Funded by the John Templeton Foundation; the site is a collaborative effort between the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth and eight affiliates.

## Total College Planning

5521 Reseda Blvd., Suite 107

Tarzana, CA 91356