



March 2010

434-951-9310

www.tandemfs.org

cgillespie@tandemfs.org

April 2010

Seniors – Final acceptance letters should arrive. Keep your eyes open for Spring Open Houses for Admitted Students!

Juniors – Visit colleges
Prepare for AP Exams

10th - ACT plus Writing

20th – 22nd – “College Survival 101”
Brown Bag Lunch series w/Harold Mock and Catherine Gillespie

Seniors – Compare acceptances; evaluate financial aid offers; discuss w/Catherine

May 2009

Seniors – Make final college choice; notify the colleges you will not attend; check out loan options if needed

1st – Common reply deadline for college decisions

1st – SAT and Subject Tests

3th – 14th - AP exams

27th – Last day of classes!!!

Looking for “the Right Fit”? Consider Size!

Many juniors are just beginning the process of looking at colleges. The number and variety of institutions can be daunting! One of the most important considerations is a college's size. A small college of 2,000 students provides a very different experience than a large university of 20,000.

A small college can be like living in a small town versus a large city. People say hello when they see you. Professors greet you by name and stop to chat. Faculty and staff are there to help, and the atmosphere can help students feel they belong. To be honest, some students find anonymity more appealing. In a big university, you might be able to go all semester without talking to your professors!

Educators are in agreement that students get more out of school when they are engaged. That means interacting with professors and students, doing research, and being involved in campus life. At smaller colleges, this level of engagement is built into the system. At large universities, students have to have the skills to take the initiative and create that kind of experience for themselves.

Some students believe that if they haven't decided on a major or career, they should go to a large university where they will be able to sample lots of possibilities and figure out what they want to do. But small colleges offer hundreds of classes each year and generally have more personalized advising programs. Ironically, students often find it easier to discover their passion at a smaller college, where they get the benefit from deeper relationships with professors who choose small colleges because they want to teach undergraduates.

Many students want a college that's bigger than high school. But *every* college is physically bigger than high school. In

addition to classroom buildings for art, music, social sciences, natural sciences, there are residence and dining halls, a library and student union, athletic facilities, counseling offices, health services and more. A college campus, by its very nature, doesn't feel as confining as high school.

After spending their high school years at a small institution, some Tandem students are concerned that they won't find enough interesting people at a small college. They might be reassured to know that, even at small colleges, they will find students from different parts of the country, as well as from different ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Some students express interest in large universities because they are attracted to the great variety of activities, sporting events and campus programs. It's important to understand that, while the number is undoubtedly larger, there may actually be more opportunities at a small college to participate in those activities because there are fewer students competing to write for the school paper or work at the campus radio station.

While small colleges offer many benefits, they're not for everyone. Some students thrive on the excitement of seeing thousands of people walking across campus every day. They know what they want and are assertive enough to pursue it. They get to know their professors during office hours and seek help when they need it. They aren't intimidated dealing with bureaucracy. They will create a sense of community by getting involved in activities.

The key to a successful college experience, as always, is finding a good match.

The Ratings Effect

The higher the ratings, the more people that want the product. Although many college administrators publicly dismiss college rankings as meaningless, they are under pressure to improve their rankings. Higher rankings mean more applicants and increased selectivity, which in turn drives the college's ranking still higher. Rankings can also impact alumni donations, and even this can affect future ratings. But what effect does a college's ranking really have on the quality of education received by its students?

To answer that, you need to understand the factors that are considered by the organization providing the ranking. The most widely read is probably that of U.S. News & World Report. To create their annual ranking, U.S. News looks at data supplied by the colleges themselves (SAT scores, GPA, number of applications, alumni donations, expenditures/student, etc.) as well

as factoring in a reputational rating by administrators at other colleges, who may not know much about the college they are ranking.

Although there are other ratings guides that use different criteria for ranking, none can accurately assess the quality of teaching. None consider how well prepared graduates are for the job market or for graduate school. They also are unable to rank the quality of each school community that makes that college a good place to attend.

When choosing a college, look at the experience that students have at that institution. Spending four years at a college where you'll be fully engaged in learning and happy and successful as a member of the community will make that college number one for you—and that's the only ranking that matters!

Do You Need to Take SAT Subject Exams?

College testing requirements are always in flux. The rules about the need for SAT Subject Exams continue to change from year to year and college to college. Although only a small percentage of the nation's 2200 four-year colleges require these exams, many highly selective private universities and all of the University of California colleges still require students to submit scores from two (and occasionally three) different exams as part of the application process. Certain fields of study, such as engineering, may also have specific subject test requirements. Engineering colleges often require the Math II exam as well as either chemistry or physics. In most cases, however, any two exams from different subject areas (such as US History and Spanish, or English Literature and Math II) will satisfy college requirements. Since rules vary, you'll want to check with each college you're considering in order to determine exactly which exams will be required for admission or placement.

Current juniors who have done well in specific subject areas should take SAT Subject Exams in those subjects when they have completed their final year of study in that area. For example, strong Biology students can take the Biology Subject Test at the conclusion of their AP Biology class at the end of junior year. Good in foreign language? Take the appropriate language exam after at least four years of study. Unsure of whether you really need to take these exams? Talk to Catherine in College Counseling about the kinds of schools you are interested in attending, and she'll help you assess the need for these tests in your testing plan.

SAT, Subject Tests and ACT w/Writing Registration

SAT & Subject Tests	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (w/fee)	ACT & ACT w/Writing	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (w/fee)
5/1/10	3/31/10	4/15/10	6/12/10	5/7/10	5/21/10
6/5/10	5/5/10	5/19/10			

Juniors should register online ASAP at collegeboard.com and actstudent.org!

The “Extroverted” Bias in College Admissions

“Introverted” and “Extroverted”—students often dislike these labels and wonder, “Can’t I be some of both?” The truth is, students tend to veer towards one end of the spectrum or another, and college applications may categorize them more than they realize.

Admissions officers are looking for students who are not only academically talented but who will contribute to the campus community. Although, in reality, everyone contributes in their own way, there is an undeniable bias towards the more extroverted students. Extroverts can steal the limelight in every-day life, and unfortunately, it can also happen in the college admissions process.

The student who directs a play often draws greater attention than the student who works behind the scenes with the crew to carry out the director’s vision. Colleges certainly benefit from having team players among their ranks – but it’s easy to be drawn to leaders.

A teacher who writes a recommendation letter saying a student has “a quiet depth” or is “insightful but doesn’t often share her ideas in class” may unintentionally harm that student’s application. Colleges may wonder whether the introverted student will be brave enough to start a new club, join an intramural sport or an a cappella group, or organize a charity fundraiser.

To combat these assumptions, introverted students can strive to push themselves out of their comfort zones and seek out activities that will even out the playing field. Being the leader of a club is one of the best ways to prove self-confidence and ability to work with others, but if that isn’t a good fit, there are other ways to make themselves stand out in the admissions process. Establishing a one-to-one relationship, perhaps by volunteering to tutor a younger child, can be a safe and rewarding way to contribute to the community.

Students who really want to challenge themselves could even take an acting or public speaking class to become more comfortable talking in front of people. More risk-averse students might ask teachers for help in finding less intimidating ways to contribute. Admissions officers know no one is perfect, and they appreciate seeing students challenge themselves and trying to grow.

Take a look at your extracurricular activities and notice what they say about you. Do you come across as more of an introvert or extrovert? If you appear to be an introvert, do you have activities that also demonstrate your ability to not only work with others, but lead? If not, try to step out of your comfort zone and seek out activities and roles that will help level the playing field in the admissions process.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

April 20th – 22nd – “College Survival 101” Brown Bag Lunch series w/Harold Mock and Catherine Gillespie for seniors about to embark on life beyond Tandem! Learn the basics of how to survive the academic, economic and social scene of college. Come with your lunch and your questions!!!

May 24 - 26 – Pre-College Program w/Sophomores: A program designed to introduce students to all aspects of the college admissions process. Catherine will meet with 10th graders in their English classes over the course of three days to help them better understand the variety of college options available, the process by which they will apply, and explore what they hope to get out of their college experience.

June 15 - July 29 – Seven Weeks to SAT Success! For rising high school seniors and highly motivated rising juniors, Clayborne Education extends an invitation to a seven-week SAT preparation course. Taught by an experienced instructor and designed for maximum benefit, Clayborne’s SAT course equips students with integral cognitive skills and powerful test-taking strategies. The course will be held on Tuesday and Thursday nights at Tandem Friends School, from June 15 - July 29. **For more information about fees and registration**, contact Clay Daniel at director@clayborne.com or go to www.clayborne.com.

Scholarship Opportunities

Rolling Acceptances:

The Sarah Lanier Tabb Oliver Memorial Scholarship

Deadline: Applications are accepted starting Feb 15 and continue until scholarship is awarded

Applications available at:

www.jmu.edu/finaid/scholarships/town_sch.shtml

March Deadlines:

The Dorothy J. Hall Scholarship

Deadline: March 30

Applications available at:

http://www.vacu.org/About_VACU/Scholarships.aspx

April Deadlines:

The Armenian Education Center

Deadline: April 1

Applications available at:

<http://www.armenian-educationcenter.org/home/scholarships.html>

The Central VA Electric Cooperative

Deadline: April 1

Applications available at:

<http://vmdaec.com/education/>

The Charlottesville Track Club

Deadline: April 1

Applications available at:

www.charlottesville-trackclub.org/CTC_Scholarship_Application_2010.pdf

The George E. Allen Academic Scholarship

Deadline: April 1

Applications available at:

www.parkgrp.com/~allen/assets/files/ScholarshipApp2009%281%29.pdf

The Virginia Athletic Trainers Association

Deadline: April 3

Applications available at:

http://www.vata.us/scholarship/scholarship_application.pdf

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

Deadline: April 5

Applications available at:

<http://www.myrec.coop/content-documents/learn-scholarship-application-2010.pdf>

The Charlottesville Kiwanis Club

Deadline: April 15

Information may be found at:

<http://kiwanis.avenue.org/graves.html>

The Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association

Deadline: April 16

Applications available at:

<http://www.vesaorg.net/scholarships/>

Northrop Grumman Engineering Scholarship Program

Deadline: April 30

Applications available at:

<http://www.es.northropgrumman.com/community/engineers/index.html>

June Deadlines:

Abbott and Fenner Scholarship Program

Deadline: June 19

Applications available at:

<http://www.abbottandfenner.com/scholarships.htm>

BigSun Scholarship

Deadline: June 24

Applications available at:

<http://www.bigsunathletics.com/>

September Deadlines:

SunTrust Off to College Scholarship

Deadline: September 14

Applications available at:

<http://www.offtocollege.info/>

www.CampusTours.com

Although the best way to judge the fit of a prospective college is through an extended personal visit to the campus, time, distance, and financial constraints may prevent you from making such visits to all of the schools on your college list. Viewing the virtual tour offered by a college can help you get a feel for that school. The index at CampusTours provides quick links to the virtual tours of hundreds of universities as well as links to their websites. Also included are statistical facts including size, location, enrollment and admissions statistics, admission requirements, majors, and college sports offered.