APPLICATION FACTORS

Academic Record
- Factors
  - Performance (Grades)
  - Rigor
  - Focus – Performance in coursework related to intended major
- Typically the centerpiece of the application

Test Scores
- Factors
  - SAT or ACT
  - SAT Subject Tests, if applicable
  - English Proficiency exams, if applicable
- Student must order official score reports to be sent to colleges
  - For UCs and CSUs, only one test report is required regardless of number of campuses you are applying to
- Fairtest.org for Test-optional and Test-flexible colleges

Essays
- Types
  - Personal Statement (ex. Common App Essay, 650 words maximum)
  - Short Essays (ex. UC Personal Insight Questions, choose 4 of 8, 350 words maximum)
  - Supplemental Essays (ex. “Why us?”)
- See Counseling for strategy, brainstorming, revision

Extracurricular Activities
- Types
  - Academic Enrichment programs and coursework
  - Volunteering
  - Paid Work Experience
  - Athletics
  - Clubs
  - Talents/Hobbies
Family/Community Responsibilities
- (Anything you spend time on outside of classes)
- Colleges value depth of participation over breadth

Letters of Recommendation
- Recommenders
  - Teachers
  - Counselor
  - (Additional—use caution whenever submitting additional materials—consult with Counselor)
- Purpose of LOR is to provide outside perspective on student’s qualities not otherwise represented on the application

Interview
- Types
  - Evaluative—Has greater impact on admission, typically conducted through Office of Admission
  - Informational—Has less impact on admission, often conducted by local alumni
- Not always offered as part of the admissions process. Offered subject to process and availability.

(Portfolios, Auditions, etc. for specialized programs)

TESTING

- **SAT and ACT are interchangeably accepted by colleges.** Prep for the one that you are most comfortable with.
  - For an at-a-glance comparison of the SAT and ACT, please see: [https://www.studypoint.com/ed/act-vs-sat/](https://www.studypoint.com/ed/act-vs-sat/)
- **Register for the test WITH the optional Writing/Essay section**, as some schools (most notably the UCs) require it. We recommend registering for the test at least 6-8 weeks prior to the exam, as testing locations fill up quickly. The registration deadline is typically about a month before the exam.
- **When are the tests offered?**
  - SAT Test Dates: [https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines)
- **How many times** should you take the exam? Most students take the exam 2-3 times. Please be aware that some colleges require you to submit scores from all of your test
sittings; therefore, avoid starting your testing too early and unnecessarily having to submit lower or too many scores.

- **When** should you take the exam? We recommend starting your SAT/ACT testing in the second semester of your Junior Year. If you plan to take multiple tests, treat December as the last potential month you can take a test (October for early application schools.)

- **When should you begin Test Prep?** Use your time in school to your advantage and allow yourself to front load content with the work you’re already doing in school; both the SAT and ACT, for example, cover content through Algebra 2/Trig. Therefore, you won’t want to start test prep too early before you have even addressed that content in school. In addition, maximize that Membean time, and then begin test prep to review. It’s a more efficient use of time to review content that you’ve already learned versus learning it for the first time in an accelerated test prep review context. For this reason, we recommend starting test prep no earlier than first semester of junior year.
  - Please see the attached Test Prep grid to compare options. Referrals for specific providers will depend on the student and family and are available through Counseling.
  - Recommendations for Low- or No-Cost SAT/ACT Test Prep are also available through Counseling.

- **SAT Subject Tests?** These are generally not required by most colleges with the exception of certain majors or programs (Engineering, Physical Sciences, etc.) at some colleges and some of the smaller, liberal arts colleges. You will discuss whether you should take these with your counselor in junior year.

**COLLEGE RESEARCH**

- [Naviance](#) (O’Dowd-specific admissions statistics)
- [Niche](#) (Third-Party College Reviews)
- [Fastweb](#) (Scholarship Search)
COLLEGE ADMISSION GENERAL TIMELINE

JUNIOR
- Now: Keep your grades up
- Now - Spring: Sign up for SAT/ACT & Consider Prep
- Now - Summer: Research Colleges
- Now - Summer: Consider Finances & Options
- Spring: Meet w/Counselor & Start building College List

SENIOR
- March - April: Receive Decisions
- November - January: Submit Applications
- July - December: Work on College Essays
- August - October: Meet w/Counselor & Finalize College List
- August - December: Take Another SAT/ACT if needed

- Register at Chosen College by May 1