# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**TESTING SCHEDULE** ................................................................................................................ 4  
PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) ..................... 4  
SAT I  Reasoning Test & SAT II Subject Tests .......................................................................... 4  
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams (May 3-7 & 10-14) ........................................................... 4

**COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR** .......................................................................................... 5  
Fifth Form Year—Winter Term ................................................................................................ 5  
Fifth Form Year—Spring Term ................................................................................................. 5  
Fifth Form Year—Summer ....................................................................................................... 6  
Sixth Form Year—Fall Term ..................................................................................................... 6  
Sixth Form Year—Winter Term ............................................................................................... 7  
Sixth Form Year—Spring Term ................................................................................................ 7

**PHILOSOPHY & POLICIES** ................................................................................................... 8  
Independent Counselors .......................................................................................................... 8  
Reporting and Sending Standardized Test Scores .................................................................... 8  
College Visits ............................................................................................................................ 8  
Application and Essay Review .................................................................................................. 8

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTING COLLEGES** .............................................................................. 9  
Researching Yourself ................................................................................................................. 9  
Researching Colleges .............................................................................................................. 11  
Resources ................................................................................................................................ 12  
Sample Letter/E-mail to a College Admissions Office ........................................................... 14  
College Visits and Interviews ................................................................................................. 15  
Visit and Interview Worksheet ............................................................................................... 18

**THE APPLICATION** ............................................................................................................ 19  
The Personal Application ....................................................................................................... 20  
College Admissions Plans ....................................................................................................... 20  
Some Thoughts on Early Applications .................................................................................. 22  
Essays and Short Answers ........................................................................................................ 23  
Extracurricular activities .......................................................................................................... 23  
Athletics ................................................................................................................................... 23  
Visual and Performing Arts ................................................................................................. 26  
Sample Letter/E-mail to a Coach or Special Interest Person .................................................. 28  
Secondary School Reports ...................................................................................................... 29
FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS ................................................................. 31
  General Definitions .................................................................................................. 31
  Scholarships .............................................................................................................. 31
  Applying for Financial Aid ....................................................................................... 32

STANDARDIZED TESTING ..................................................................................... 35
  (PSAT/NMSQT) Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test ................................. 35
  SAT-I: Reasoning Test ............................................................................................... 35
  SAT-II: Subject Tests ................................................................................................ 35
  Non-standardized Testing ......................................................................................... 37
  AP—Advanced Placement ......................................................................................... 37
  ACT—American College Testing Program ............................................................... 37
  TOEFL—Test of English as a Foreign Language ..................................................... 38
  Test Preparation ....................................................................................................... 38

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ........................................................................... 39

AFTER THE DECISIONS .......................................................................................... 41
  Getting In ................................................................................................................. 41
  Getting Waitlisted ................................................................................................... 41
  Getting Denied ....................................................................................................... 42
  Interim Year ............................................................................................................. 42
TESTING SCHEDULE (2003-2004 SCHOOL YEAR)

PSAT/NMSQT (PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST)

October 21  (Fourth and Fifth Forms)

SAT I REASONING TEST & SAT II SUBJECT TESTS

October 11  usually Sixth Form early applicants, although most Sixth Formers test on this date
November 1  Many Sixth Formers test on this date (this is the only date Language with Listening tests are given)
December 6  mostly SAT II
January 24  usually V Form take SAT I
May 1  mostly SAT II
June 5  mostly SAT II (Graduation Weekend)

NOTE: SPS WILL NOT BE A TEST CENTER ON March 27, 2004

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) EXAMS (MAY 3-7 & 10-14)
The following exams are generally offered:

- English Literature
- English Language
- French Literature
- French Language
- Spanish Literature
- Spanish Language
- German Language
- Latin: Vergil
- Latin Literature
- Calculus AB
- Calculus BC
- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Computer Science A and Computer Science AB
- Statistics
- U. S. History
- European History
- World History
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics B and Physics C
- Psychology
- Human Geography
- Environmental Science
- Government & Politics: Comparative
- Government & Politics: US
- Art History
- Studio Art (portfolios required)
- Music Theory
COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

This is a general guide to help you understand how the next 18 months will look during your college selection process.

FIFTH FORM YEAR—WINTER TERM

JANUARY

- Familiarize yourself with the College Handbook
- Review PSAT results and look to see where you need to improve
- Complete and return Winter Term Questionnaire
- Take the SAT-I at the Test Center: SPS
  (check your admission ticket to see where you are registered)
- College Advisers will be assigned in latter part of January

FEBRUARY

- Do a college search using the Internet. Use any search engine, enter the words “college search” and you’ll find many sites to help you
- Meet with assigned college adviser for preliminary interview, and to start developing a college list if you plan to visit some colleges during Spring break
- Register for March 27 SAT-I on your own if you decide to take it again this year (the deadline is February 20) (remember SPS is NOT a test center in March) *
- Arrange visits to colleges for spring break, if possible and convenient
- Participate in group registration for May and June SAT-II Subject Tests

MARCH

- Visit various types of schools over spring break if possible
- Prepare for May SAT-II Subject Tests

FIFTH FORM YEAR—SPRING TERM

APRIL

- Complete and return Spring Term Questionnaire
- Meet again with college adviser, and your teachers, to discuss standardized testing plans and courses for Sixth Form year
- Research colleges; look in handbook for list of sources

MAY

- Attend the College Fair
- Take appropriate SAT-II Subject Tests and AP Examinations
- Continue meeting with adviser
- Finalize your preliminary college list
- Register with NCAA Clearinghouse if you might play Division I or II athletics
JUNE
- Take appropriate SAT-II Subject Tests
- Speak with teachers who will be writing recommendations for you in the fall
- Plan summer college visits—tours, information sessions, and interviews; remember appointments do fill early. Try to visit with professors and/or coaches if appropriate and possible
- Speak with departing teachers, or SYA teachers, now if you’d like to have one write a college recommendation for you

FIFTH FORM YEAR—SUMMER
JULY and AUGUST
- Participate in summer activities
- Visit and tour colleges, interview when possible (prepare for interview by researching the college and anticipating possible questions), and request applications
- Complete Common Application (mailed to you), and the Sixth Form Questionnaire
- Take an SAT preparatory class at home, if you wish
- Continue to refine your college list

SIXTH FORM YEAR—FALL TERM
SEPTEMBER
- Hand in your common application and fall questionnaire to the College Office
- Meet with adviser to finalize college list
- Continue to gather application materials
- Speak with your teachers about teacher recommendations, provide them with a list of your activities/accomplishments, recommendation forms, and self-addressed, stamped envelopes
- Work on applications
- Financial aid applicants file a CSS PROFILE® registration form (see Financial Aid chapter)
- Attend college mini-fair(s)
- Participate in group registration for November and December SAT-I and/or SAT-II
- Check the college bulletin board daily

OCTOBER
- Retake SAT-I or SAT-II Tests (SPS is a test center), have scores sent to four colleges on your list. Your registration fee includes the cost of sending your scores to four colleges.
- Early applicants hand in all Secondary School and Mid-Year Report forms to College Office
- Continue to meet regularly with college adviser
- Work on college essays and applications
- Attend college mini-fair(s)
- Visit a college or two the day after Parents Weekend if possible
- Check the college bulletin board daily
NOVEMBER

- Hand in final college list to College Office
- All Secondary School Report forms are due to College Office
- Take the SAT-I or SAT-II tests (SPS is a test center) and have scores sent to colleges. Your registration fee includes the cost of sending your scores to four colleges.
- Early applications due by November 1 or 15 (check deadlines)
- Continue to meet with adviser and work on applications (even if you have applied Early somewhere!)
- Visit a college or two over Thanksgiving Vacation, if possible
- Check the college bulletin board daily

SIXTH FORM YEAR—WINTER TERM

DECEMBER

- Continue to work on applications (even if you have applied Early somewhere!)
- Take the SAT-I or SAT-II tests (SPS is a test center), if necessary
- Wait for decision letters if you applied early (usually sent by December 15)
- Notify the College Office and teachers writing recommendations of acceptance results and future plans
- Check the college bulletin board daily

JANUARY—MARCH

- Keep working—grades still matter!
- Financial aid applicants file the FAFSA (as soon as possible after January 1)
- Continue meeting with college advisers, if necessary
- Check the college bulletin board daily

SIXTH FORM YEAR—SPRING TERM

APRIL

- Receive decision letters between April 1 and April 15
- In writing, notify College Office of all decisions
- Meet with adviser immediately if you plan to stay on one or more wait lists
- Notify all colleges of your decision
- Check the college bulletin board daily

MAY

- Mail a deposit to ONE college by May 1, even if you are remaining on a wait list
- Fill out final college forms and return them to the College Office
- Take Advanced Placement examinations, if appropriate
- Check the college bulletin board daily

JUNE

- Graduate! (No more need to check the college bulletin board!)
PHILOSOPHY & POLICIES

While the key objective of St. Paul’s School is to support its students’ personal and intellectual growth, many regard admission to college as the symbolic culmination of the St. Paul’s experience. Certainly, as a critical point of personal transition, the process of applying to college is vital to the overall development and education of our students.

Throughout the college admissions process, the chief goal of the college advisers is to give each student and his or her family tools adequate to the task of finding the right match—that institution best suited to offer academic and personal challenge appropriate to the student’s abilities following graduation from St. Paul’s.

Also central to the college admissions process are issues of self-knowledge and lessons about planning for life. Students must realistically reflect upon the depth, rigor, and magnitude of their performance during their secondary school years, and upon how college admissions personnel will regard that record. They must honor not only their dreams and ambitions, but also recognize the possibility of rejection. Rejection is not an easy prospect to face, and this is especially true during adolescence. Our advising philosophy is based, in large part, upon our sensitivity to this powerfully human dynamic.

College advising at St. Paul’s aims to demystify this potentially intimidating process, and teach students, first, where they have an opportunity and responsibility to control the process, and, second, how to effectively exert that control. At the same time, we invite parents to work with us in preparing their children for the critically important transition from adolescence to adulthood that college matriculation represents in our society today.

INDEPENDENT COUNSELORS

Should your parents choose to hire an independent counselor, we invite the opportunity to consult with him or her. In fact, the better independent counselors contact us early in the Sixth Form year to learn more about their client’s overall record in the context of St. Paul’s School. Your best interest is our first priority, and to further that interest everyone involved in the process should be talking openly and honestly.

REPORTING AND SENDING STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

You are responsible for sending standardized test scores to colleges (see Chapter Four). You own your test scores, so no one but you should have the right to send them to colleges. Test scores are NOT included on the St. Paul’s transcript. We will not fax or send test scores to colleges or coaches without your permission.

COLLEGE VISITS

You are allowed ONE official “college weekend,” so use it wisely. You must secure two signatures for a college visit—first your adviser’s, then your college adviser’s—not the other way around. Any additional visits to colleges will fall under the regular weekend rules: long, short, etc. Good times to visit during the school year: the Monday after Parents Weekend, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Holidays.

APPLICATION AND ESSAY REVIEW

As a rule, we do not look over the final drafts of your application materials. We recommend that an adult, whose opinion you respect, read and critique your applications.
CRITERIA FOR SELECTING COLLEGES

RESEARCHING YOURSELF

“Perhaps the single most important aspect in beginning the college process is to know yourself.” First, before you do anything else, you must take a good look at yourself in the mirror and ask, “Just who am I, anyway?” The key to a successful college application is the ability to project a clear, distinct voice. Your most difficult task throughout the year, then, will be to find that voice inside of you and project it outward in your applications and during your interviews. There is no “right” voice, no magic combination of personality traits that will guarantee admission. Avoid falling into the trap of manufacturing the “perfect” voice—the one you think your friend has, for example. College admissions personnel can spot a fraud a mile away. Simply be YOU. The rest will fall into place. Following is a series of activities that will help you in the often-difficult task of getting to the bottom of who “you” truly are.

Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation is for your eyes only ... but feel free to bring it to a meeting with your college adviser to discuss its contents. These are some of the questions you may be asked during interviews and on essay questions, so it is worth your while to spend considerable time and thought on them.

Throughout your work with your college adviser in the months ahead, you will be immersed in talk about maintaining rigor and depth in your course of study, about your overall achievement, and about the level and significance of your community contributions. It is generally true that the way to be a “good” candidate for college is to be a “good” performer—in a variety of areas—in the St. Paul's School community.

But what about you? Never mind what the colleges want. What do you want? The many questions that follow are intended to help keep your focus on college where it belongs—on you as an individual. You may feel embarrassed or self-conscious as you consider these questions, but no one will see your answers but you. This is your private worksheet. You might want to revisit all or some of these questions from time to time to test your original responses and to develop a better sense of your evolving priorities. Writing the answers on separate paper may be helpful, as you will not feel constricted simply to the space between questions. An honest and thoughtful effort at self-evaluation can:

- help you find the colleges that are right for you.
- prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in application essays and interviews.
- help you present yourself effectively to the colleges of your choice.
- help you to take an honest, realistic look at yourself in the college process.
Your Personality and Relationships with Others
1. How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your best qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
2. Which relationships are most important to you and why?
3. Describe the students at St. Paul's. Which ones do you feel you are close to?
4. Are you influenced by others who are important to you? How important to you are approval, rewards, and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition, or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment, or criticism?

The World Around You
5. How would you describe your family and home? How have they influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by them?
6. What do your parents and others expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? To what pressures have you felt it necessary to conform?
7. What is the most controversial issue you have encountered in recent years? Why does the issue concern you? What is your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?
8. Have you ever encountered people who think and act differently from you? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
9. What concerns you the most about the world around you? Assuming obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start?

Your Education
10. What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed most? Which courses have been most difficult for you? Why?
11. What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects; independent reading; school activities; job or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
12. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teacher engage your interest the most?
13. How well has St. Paul's prepared you for college? In what areas do you feel most confident? Least confident? Have you been challenged by your courses?
14. Have you worked up to your potential? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your SAT scores? What are the best measures of your potential for college work?
15. Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) that have interfered with your academic performance?

Your Activities and Interests
16. What activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of classes and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
17. How would others describe your role in the School? In your home community? What would you consider your most significant contribution?
18. After a long hard day what would you most enjoy doing? What is fun or relaxing for you?
Your Goals and Values
19. What aspects of your high school years have been most meaningful to you? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently?
20. How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
21. What kind of person do you want to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths which would you like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
22. Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be? Is there a profession you admire or would like to learn more about?

RESEARCHING COLLEGES
There are over 2,000 accredited four-year colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Generally, they can be broken down into three categories: highly selective, selective, and less selective.

The best advice we can offer you is to make every effort to begin your college search with an open mind. Your objective ought to be to find the colleges that are best suited to your interests and needs. It’s time to do some soul searching and, more importantly, some in-depth research about your options. What’s important to you? Do you want to become a small fish in a huge pond? Or would you like to pursue one-on-one relationships with faculty members, like you have at SPS? Are the departments you will explore as an undergraduate strong, weak, or non-existent at the colleges you are considering?

As you begin to think about where you’re going to spend the next four years of your life, it’s important for you to remember that you are interviewing the colleges just as much as they are interviewing you. The research phase is challenging and time-consuming, but rewarding. Remember how you felt when you visited St. Paul’s? What made you decide to come here? Did you have a gut feeling that this was the school for you? If you did, hopefully your instincts are alive and well as you begin to research and create your own college list. On page 21, we have constructed a college research grid to help you organize your information.

Research Tips
There are three phases of research that you ought to consider:
1. learning everything there is to know about the college before you visit
2. asking the right questions and gaining information during your visit
3. following up on information or instincts after your visit

Of these, the first phase is simultaneously the most important and the most difficult. It is crucial for you to do your homework before you visit a school so that when you get there, you can apply the information and ask pertinent questions. By reading up on the school before you visit, you’ll be well aware of the number of students enrolled, the male/female ratio, average SAT scores of admitted candidates, study abroad programs, etc. Do your homework!
RESOURCES

Resources at Home
There is a myriad of resources available to you that range from highly subjective opinions about the schools you are considering, to more objective descriptions about a school's programs and philosophies. Just like any research project, it's a good idea to surround yourself with a variety of sources from both ends of the spectrum so that you may ultimately form your own opinion about a college and make an informed decision about whether it's right for you. As you begin to research colleges, you will be surprised at how much information people around you willingly offer.

When you're at home for vacation, make the best use of your time and local resources. Following are a few ideas on how to start your college research from home:

**College Publications**—If you haven't done so already, draft an e-mail or call those colleges that you know you would like to research, and request that they send you their view books and course catalogues.

**Local Alumni**—In that same letter in which you request information, ask the admissions office for a list of local alumni who might be willing to speak with you about their alma mater. Not all schools may have established alumni networks, but they will generally be able to offer you names of people who can give you some insight. Make sure that you follow up appropriately with these people if they meet with you (see page 25 on Etiquette).

**Bookstores/Guidebooks**—If you live in a large city or town with a wealth of bookstores, take some time to survey their inventory of college guidebooks. Keep in mind that of the many guidebooks that deck the shelves of your local Barnes & Noble, a few are plainly terrible, most are adequate, and some are credible sources that we have relied upon for many years. Rather than using guidebooks as your primary source of information, think of them as resources to guide you in your opinions and help you pose appropriate questions of admissions officers, your adviser, and yourself. There are a few standout titles to get you going (see Appendix), but please let us know if you come across any others you think are worthy of listing.

Resources at SPS
**College Advisers**—You will be assigned an adviser in January, but please feel free to consult with any one of us anytime, keeping in mind the busy nature of our schedules, particularly at certain times of the year. We are here to help guide you in your research, formulate an appropriate list, and be your advocates during the process. In order to do this most effectively, we need you to work with us in meeting deadlines and keeping us informed. The more we know about you, the more we can help you in this process. Once you are assigned an adviser, make sure to schedule regular meetings and provide us with the information we request in a timely fashion.

**College Office**—The office area, located on the 3rd floor of the Schoolhouse, provides valuable information. When you have a free period or time between classes, come up and browse through our view book, catalogue, and video collection (videos may also be checked out overnight, but college publications must remain in the office). We make every effort to update our files and keep current copies of catalogues and view books.
World Wide Web — You have the option of visiting college campuses through virtual tours and websites. These are frequently more current than the college view books and are a great way to access addresses, names, department listings, student organizations, and alumni networks. (See Appendix for Useful Web Sites)

Spring College Fair — Held specifically for Fifth Formers (April 29, 2004) this is an ideal time to investigate schools you may be considering but don’t know too much about. Use this opportunity to speak with admissions officers from schools that might be difficult for you to visit. It’s also a good idea to meet representatives from those schools you know you’d like to apply.

Fall College Mini-Fairs — Sixth and Fifth Formers should attend these fall sessions with selected college admissions officers. Held in September and October, these fairs provide an opportunity for Sixth Formers to further establish contact with the schools on their list, and for Fifth Formers to begin to sample various types of schools. This is a good time to check in with colleges that you may have visited over the summer, or speak one-on-one with a representative from a college in which you are interested but were unable to visit. Express your interest to these admissions officers and use this time to build your information base and expand your network!
SAMPLE LETTER/E-MAIL TO A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICE

Date

Name of Receiver
Name of School
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Admissions Officer,
I am a Fifth Former (junior) at St. Paul's School and I will graduate in (month and year). I am interested in applying to your school. Would you please send me your most recent view book and application (also financial aid application, if necessary, and literature on a specific program of interest)?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Address (Be specific—should they mail to your home address or to St. Paul's School?)
City, State, Zip Code
E-mail address
COLLEGE VISITS AND INTERVIEWS

Once you have completed some preliminary research on colleges, you ought to have a good idea of which ones merit further investigation—i.e. a visit. Visiting college campuses is crucial for two reasons:

1. You are able to gain a feel for the campus, students, academic departments, and areas that interest you specifically, rather than those that interest the editor of the view book.
2. You can demonstrate your interest in the school, and simultaneously apply the homework you have done prior to your visit.

When you're visiting a school, your goal ought to be to balance the impressions you have gained from your preliminary research with your own personal instincts. In other words, don't believe everything that you read or hear, but use the information to guide you towards asking the right questions in the limited time that you have on any given campus. Be tactful, but ask good questions of the right people at each school you visit. That might mean setting up a meeting with someone in the English Department, the Athletic Department, or with the editor of the college's newspaper. Whoever it is, make the most of your visit and let people know that you are interested.

A Word About Interviews

In many cases, a visit to a college campus will allow you the benefit of an interview. If a school offers interviews, or features them as something that is “optional” or “not required” strongly consider scheduling one anyway. Regardless of the relative importance of an interview in the overall application process, one-on-one contact with as many representatives from the college or university of your choice is important. And don’t stop with just your first choice. Arrange on-campus interviews at as many schools as you possibly can. Not only are interviews a great way for you to articulate your interests, they also provide you with more insight into the college admissions process and the unique features of the various schools you are considering. Who knows? You may even be surprised at the answers you come up with.

A final thought—are you painfully shy? Do you get tongue-tied when you are nervous? Has public speaking always been a sore spot with you? Speak with to your adviser before scheduling interviews if you think they might put you at a disadvantage.

When to Plan Your College Visits

The best way to gain a gut feeling about a school is to visit it when the students are in session. Unfortunately, since you are also enrolled as a student, this is not always possible. Do your best to visit when you can see the students, sit in on a lecture, meet faculty members from the departments in which you are interested, etc. While you should certainly call the schools on your list to determine their school calendar and if/when they offer interviews, here are several blocks of time during which you and your family could consider visiting schools:

- **Spring:** Spring Vacation, Spring Holiday Weekend (V Form).
- **Summer:** mid-to-late August, since most schools begin fall sessions then.
- **Fall:** during your college weekend; the day after Parents Weekend; Thanksgiving vacation.
- **Winter:** the first few days of Christmas Vacation and Mid-winter Weekend.
Maximizing Your College Visits

While it is possible to have a successful college weekend with very little prior planning, the best way to make the most of your visit is to plan ahead. If you’re going to visit schools with your parent(s), make sure you sit down with mom and/or dad to plan a calendar of visits. Your parents most likely want to help you in this process in every way that they can. Ask them for advice about calling schools, or ask them to help you set up appointments. Of course, it's best if you do most of the legwork yourself, because you will appreciate the effort that went into your visit and learn more in the long run.

Here are a few thoughts to get you going on planning your visit and setting up meetings with the appropriate people:

a. Plan to spend at least half a day at the school.
b. Call the admissions office to arrange an interview if they offer interviews on campus. If they don’t, schedule an alumni interview in your hometown.
c. Incorporate one of the school’s general information sessions into your day.
d. Niche interviews: If you don't know them already, ask the admissions office for the name(s) and phone numbers/e-mail addresses of the athletic coaches, and/or the music/art/drama/dance professors who represent your interests. Contact them to let them know that you are coming and ask whether you might meet with them or someone in their department.
e. Academic interviews: Call the departments in which you are specifically interested and repeat step ‘d.’ Remember, this is a time for you to continue your research into the academic departments as well as to establish contacts!
e. Contact any friends/acquaintances/SPS alumni you know at the school and try to meet them for coffee or lunch (if you can’t stay with them). These are frequently the best sources for the inside scoop … but remember to maintain your objectivity and form your own opinion.

Etiquette During and After Your Visit

When you visit a school, remember that you are representing both yourself and St. Paul’s. In other words, act naturally but remember that what you do or say may ultimately impact your standing in the admissions office. You will never understand the complexities of each school’s network, so assume that everyone you meet is in some way connected to the admissions process and treat them with due respect. This means dressing appropriately for your visit and conducting yourself in a positive manner: from your initial handshake, to your undivided attention, to your parting thanks and gracious good-bye. Remember, you have requested to spend time with their staff, so make the most of the opportunity.

After Your Visit

It is always a good idea to send a thank you note to the person with whom you interviewed. While this note may wind up in your admissions file, at some point along the way, the best reason for doing so reverts to basic rules of courtesy. Especially with the ease of e-mail, a brief note is an effortless way to show your appreciation for someone having spent time with you.
Make Every Piece of Communication Count
Whenever you contact the admissions offices at the schools to which you are applying, assume that your phone call, e-mail, letter, or fax is recorded and added to your file. Make it concise, polished, and something that accurately conveys your character and persona.

When you contact an admissions office, make sure that it is to provide them with something meaningful that builds your case as an applicant: an academic, athletic, or cultural award that you win, a new position that you earn, outstanding warning grades, an article that you wrote/published, etc. Do not send them fluff. Rather, furnish them with appropriate updates. If you have questions about potentially meaningful addenda to your application, consult your college adviser.

Enough Is Enough!
Remember to keep your correspondence with a college at an appropriate level. Use your judgment or ask your adviser to help you determine what “appropriate” might be, in your case. Do not barrage an admissions office with daily letters, phone calls, or e-mail or your name will be uttered with dread. Do make sure that your correspondence is meaningful, memorable, and well presented.

Getting Organized
If you’re not an organized person, you should be by christmas!

Oh, The Places You’ll Go!—After each visit, you ought to consider recording your impressions in either a journal or on a checklist. Write down the names of all the people you meet and anecdotes that will help you remember who they are and what they do. What sort of feeling did you get from the school? How was the music department? Was the campus appealing to you? Could you imagine yourself there for four years? Keep in mind that your visit gives you a one-snapshot impression; don’t overreact to a poor tour. For your convenience, on the next page we have constructed a sample checklist that might be helpful in evaluating your college visits. If this particular checklist isn’t your style, create your own. The important thing is for you to keep a comprehensive record of the things that you see and people you meet from one school to the next.

Along these same lines, keep copies of your correspondence with every school you are considering. The best way to do this is to start a file on each school as you begin your preliminary research and add to it as the process evolves. You never know when you might need to reference a postcard that you sent to a director of admissions! Keep track of everything that you send.
VISIT AND INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

College Visited ___________________________________ Date of Visit ________________

Interviewer ____________________________________ Title ___________________________
Phone __________________________________________ E-mail _________________________

Admissions Officer _______________________________ Title ___________________________
Phone __________________________________________ E-mail _________________________

My Impressions:
Campus __________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Surrounding Area _________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Students __________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Dormitories _______________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Dining Facilities ___________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Extracurricular Activities ____________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Library __________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Transportation _____________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Other ____________________________________________________________________________

Questions to Ask Interviewer:
1. ________________________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________________________

Questions to Ask Myself:
1. Would I fit in and feel comfortable here?
2. Does this school meet my needs?
3. What is my general impression?
THE APPLICATION

The application is the best opportunity for you to speak directly to the admissions office and is second in importance only to the transcript. Good essays are written and rewritten; yet the writer's voice, values, and identity remain clear and distinct in the final draft. By and large, the application (particularly the essay) is what admissions readers remember about a candidate. It is the only piece of the puzzle with the potential to sway a decision on its own. In your search for colleges that meet your needs, it is important to consider the full range of factors the colleges will use in evaluating your application.

Academic Criteria

Proven Academic Performance—your transcript, which records grades and courses for all years in high school, is arguably the single most important piece of the puzzle. It reflects academic ability, interest, and achievement over time (i.e. Rigor + Depth + Performance).

Note: Institutions consider at least the final three years of high school and are looking for students who have taken challenging and broad programs of study. It is important that you have taken the most demanding courses appropriate for you.

Standardized Testing—Your SAT-I scores are generally recognized as a reliable predictor of success during your first year of college. SAT-II scores are also used as important predictors of performance. Most selective institutions require the SAT-I (or the ACT) and three different SAT-II Subject Tests, but it is important that you research and find out specific requirements for each institution.

Teacher Recommendations—Most colleges require two teacher recommendations to help them more closely evaluate your potential as a college student with anecdotal evidence from someone who has taught you.

St. Paul's School Support—Your college adviser will write a summary of your SPS experience highlighting your academic and non-academic achievements and contributions to the School. We take information from past group adviser letters, past and current teacher comments, our conversations with you, your responses to our questionnaires, coaches, and other faculty to produce a document that most accurately reflects your capabilities and achievement. We do not rank, nor do we compare students in this document—we simply tell your story.

Non-Academic Criteria

Your Activities and Interests—What activities have you been involved with at SPS? What involvements have you had with the community, both here and at home? Which activity is most important to you?

Evidence of Leadership—You don't have to be a Sixth Form officer or a team captain to be a leader. Think of any instance when you have initiated an activity or project, when you have been a strong voice in your House, when you have set an example for others.
**Outside Recommendations**—If a person outside of the School community knows you well and can relate valuable information an extra letter may be helpful. Letters from an alumnus/a or a friend of a friend who does not know you well are not likely to add much to your application. If the person is actively involved in the school and knows you well, it could prove to be helpful.

**Special Talents**—Colleges want a well-rounded student body, so they are usually looking for students with specific talents to add to the freshman class. Let them know if you have something different or special to contribute. Having good grades and being a good person is expected of everyone.

THE PERSONAL APPLICATION

**Ethics**

When you sign your name to the application, you are stating that all of the information you provided therein is true, and that the application and essays were written by you. Please take your signature, your honor, and your word seriously in this process.

**Helpful Tips**

- **How many?** Six to eight applications with two or three in the “stretch” or “reach” category; two or three in the “mid-range” or “possible”; and two or three in the “safer” or “probable” category. Obviously, the final alignment will very much depend on the individual.
- **Be absolutely certain you have read the colleges’ admissions requirements (e.g. 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 of science, etc.)**
- **Colleges take great pains to detail clearly their specific procedures for completing and filing each part of the application. NOT ALL APPLICATIONS ARE ALIKE.** It is a step-by-step process to be completed with the greatest of care and thought.
- **Read all the instructions carefully.**
- **Have an objective adult review your application.** They may pick up on something you missed.
- **Never try to do an application in a hurry, late at night, or at the last minute.** We are talking about four very important years of your life.
- **PHOTOCOPY ALL PARTS BEFORE MAILING!**

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PLANS

*(All plans described here are specified in the colleges' admissions materials)*

**Regular Decision**

Most colleges have a particular deadline for the receipt (or postmarking) of applications, most range from December 15 onward. In this type of admission plan, the college informs applicants about decisions any time before April 15 and the student is asked to respond to an acceptance notification no later than May 1.

**Rolling Admissions**

Candidates’ credentials are reviewed in the order in which they are submitted, and candidates are notified of decisions in a short time. In general, the more academically successful students are,
the earlier they hear of their acceptances. As colleges with rolling admissions may send out their acceptances early in the academic year, it is to the student’s best advantage to apply as soon as possible. This is particularly true of many state universities that use this plan. READ your materials carefully. Although a college with this policy accepts its applicants early, the students do not have to notify the college of their decision until May 1.

**Early Decision I (ED-I)**
Some colleges have an early decision plan, involving a contractual arrangement between the student and the college. The admissions committee will review the student's application earlier than those applying by the regular deadline, and the committee will inform the student of its decision prior to April 15, generally by December 15. In turn, the student, if admitted, is committed to attending that college and must not file (and must withdraw) applications to other colleges. A student may submit only one Early Decision application.

**Early Decision II (ED-II)**
Some colleges offer an early decision plan with an application deadline that is later than ED-I, usually in December, January or February. The same rules apply as those for Early Decision I. These plans are designed to give you more time to make a thoughtful college choice decision. As with ED-I, you will be notified of the decision approximately four to six weeks later.

*Advantages of Early Decision*—a wonderful way to go IF you are absolutely CERTAIN you want to attend that particular college, since the college application process will be concluded for you if you are admitted. If you are a recruited athlete, applying ED helps to cement your commitment to a coach.

*Disadvantages of Early Decision*—the commitment you must make so early in the process; your need to be a strong candidate since the Early Decision pool is still a predominantly high-powered one; financial aid awards are, at this point, only estimates, so, if the size or nature of your financial aid award is of great significance, you may not want to close out all other options by being accepted “ED.”

When a student is deferred in the early admission process, it actually feels like rejection and can be devastating to your ego at a time of year when you need to be at the top of your game for filing applications to other colleges. Also, when you are deferred early admission, your application goes into the regular applicant pool and may not be as impressive as those submitted by students who had almost two months longer to polish their applications. There is also the possibility that you will be denied early.

**Early Action**
This plan is similar to Early Decision, but without its obligatory commitment. Early Action is available at a limited number of colleges.

*Advantages of Early Action*—again, a wonderful way to go if you have managed to narrow your focus by the fall of your Sixth Form year.

*Disadvantages of Early Action*—you need to be a very strong applicant to be considered competitive in this early pool, and in some cases your best work may still be ahead.
SOME THOUGHTS ON EARLY APPLICATIONS

We continue to be embroiled in the early application controversy in this country, and everyone seems to have good arguments both in support of and against early. Here are a few observations and a little advice. In the end, the decision is yours, but always be sure to talk the issue through with your college adviser and parents before proceeding.

Beginning in the fall of 2003, a number of prominent schools adopted a “single-choice Early Action” program. The ramifications of this change are unclear at this time, but in all likelihood we will see other universities adapt their early policies in the coming year. Your college advisers will be able to explain these changes, along with other guidelines involving Early Decision and Early Action programs.

- If you are a strong applicant in every way and you are certain that the institution you are applying to is your first choice, applying early may be the way to go. Although there is evidence that colleges are taking more students early, remember: they are continuing to take only the most academically qualified candidates in the pool!

- In the absence of outstanding academic qualifications, an early application, coupled with a special consideration (as defined earlier), may improve your chances of admission in some cases.

- An early application in and of itself does not constitute a “special consideration!” By simply applying early, you do not gain an appreciable advantage. You must first meet the general standards of the college to which you are applying. If you do not, ED or EA will do virtually nothing to improve your chances for admission.

- You do not need to apply early in order to prove to a college that it is your first choice. There are other ways of conveying that message. A handwritten note explaining that you simply are not ready to apply early shows an admissions staff that you are thoughtful enough to know what is best for you.

- If you do not feel ready to apply early for whatever reason, DON’T! Always consult with your college adviser if you feel pressured, one way or another, about this issue.

Deadlines

“Postmarked”—means you must send the application to the college with a postmark no later than the deadline date.

Pen, Pencil, Typed, Software Applications, Common Applications: What Do I Do???

This is your one and only chance to make a good impression on the entire admissions committee, so do it right!

Common Applications—The Common Application can be used at over 200 selective, independent colleges and universities. Many of these institutions use the form exclusively. All give equal consideration to the Common Application and the college’s own form. However, if you use the Common Application, you must be aware of any supplementary forms they may ask you to complete. Whichever form you choose to use, do not “mix-and-match” forms.

Electronic Applications—A growing number of students are filing electronically. Please read the college’s instructions to be sure you have satisfied all their requirements (i.e. signature). You might also download applications directly from the college’s website.
Typed—Looks terrific if you have the time and patience and if you can avoid mistakes and correction fluid marks.

Pen—Only if you can write neatly and legibly, and only in black ink.

Pencil—NEVER! (unless, for some reason, they request it)

ESSAYS AND SHORT ANSWERS

Short answers are as important as the long essays. They are a test of your ability to express yourself well in a short space. More importantly, they are used to determine both how well you know the school, and how suitable you are as a candidate. Take time with them!

Unless instructions call for handwritten essays, word-process them, paste a printout neatly in the space provided, or attach an extra sheet (with your name and social security number at the top of each attachment). Sloppy papers with spelling and grammatical errors, or poorly written statements will move the application rather quickly to the “reject” pile. Length? Usually one to four pages, but follow the directions! “In the space provided,” means just that, as does “500 words,” etc.

The essay is your one direct and personal link to the admissions committee. Even your interview is indirect since it is transmitted to the committee via the interviewer’s report. The essay is, therefore, perhaps the most vital part of the application. Admissions committees may include faculty members who read folders and pay close attention to the quality of writing.

Think about your writing before you actually do it. Most good essays are composed in the mind long before they are set to paper. Some colleges will give you a topic; others leave that to you.

The essay should reveal your best writing style and your ability to make and defend a point. One would also hope that a reader would finish your essay with a better sense of you, your values, or your perspective.

Again, have an objective adult review what you have written. A fresh set of eyes is better than those that have looked at the same page over and over again.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Unless they specify which order to state your activities, you should rank them by importance to you. Also, do not “pad” your list with those activities that are either dormant or insignificant. This same rule applies to your estimation of the hours involved, inflated numbers are easy to spot. College admissions officers are trained professionals, and they know what constitutes substantive involvement.

ATHLETICS

Suffice it to say, you are a “recruited” athlete in the process once a coach has contacted you or your coach here at the School. We are fortunate that our coaches have years of experience in helping direct students to college programs that best match their abilities. Our coaches speak with their college counterparts to gain information about program needs and your potential as a recruited athlete. The most important advice for the prospective college athlete is to keep your college adviser in the communication loop at all times.
NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association)

By the spring of Fifth Form year, it is important for you to be aware of your responsibilities in this process, before you depart for the summer.

NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse—The NCAA Clearinghouse was established for athletic eligibility and certification purposes. If you hope to be recruited by a Division I or Division II school and take an expense-paid visit to their campus (whether it be a meal, an arranged overnight accommodation, and/or travel expenses), you must register and be certified for initial eligibility by the Clearinghouse prior to your visit. These visits generally take place in the Sixth Form year. Please remember this applies to expense-paid visits—you may visit any campus at any time at your own expense for academic purposes. The freshman-eligibility standards on pages 35 and 36 for Division I and Division II should prove helpful to you.

Registering with the Clearinghouse—You need to register and complete your Student Release Form (SRF) on-line: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

You will need to have a credit card to pay your registration fee (currently $30.). After the registration is complete, you need to print out a copy of your SRF and the authorization form (Copy #1 and Copy #2) and give these to the College Office. This authorization allows the high school to send your transcript and test scores to the Clearinghouse. If you attended another school during your high school years, you will need to make copies of those same forms and send them to your previous high school(s) so they can mail official transcript(s) directly to the Clearinghouse as well. You should know that your SRF will be processed as soon as your final Fifth Form transcript is available—usually by the end of June.

Reporting Test Scores—The Clearinghouse also requires SAT scores. St. Paul’s does not list test scores on transcripts; however, photocopies of score reports are acceptable if they are sent directly from us. We will, therefore, send a copy of your scores with your transcript. We have your scores only if you wrote the St. Paul’s code number (300110) on your test registration forms—be sure we have them.

IMPORTANT—a reminder that the College Office is staffed in a limited capacity during the summer—we are giving you this advance notice so that you can take care of this prior to leaving School. Should you have any questions about the certification process, you may also contact the Clearinghouse directly at:

NCAA Clearinghouse
2255 North Dubuque Road
PO Box 4043
Iowa City, IA 52243-4043
Telephone: 877-262-1492 (8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays CT)
877-861-3003 (24-hour attendant) *
Fax: 319-337-1556

* (You must be registered and have your Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access the Clearinghouse’s 24-hour voice response system (above). You may also check the status of your file by visiting their web site. On their home page, select Prospective Student-Athlete, then on the following page select Registered Student Login. Again, you must know your social security number and your PIN to do this.)
Sample Athletic Resume

Susan Smith  
17 Ridge Hill Farm Road  
Wellesley, MA 02181  
(617) 235-5555

St. Paul's School  
325 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 229-5500, Ext. (or direct number)

Experience

St. Paul's School

Varsity Soccer: 2002 - Present
Junior Varsity Soccer: 2001

Wellesley BAYS (Boston Area Youth Soccer League)
First Team – Division I - 2001-2002

Achievements

St. Paul's School

2003 - Junior – Starting right wing; Leading Scorer on team with 12 goals;
ISL All-League Honorable Mention;
Team was Division I Quarter-finalist in New England Prep School League

2002 - Sophomore – Starting right wing; Leading scorer on team with 13 goals;
Third leading scorer in ISL (Independent School League);
All League Honorable Mention; Team was Division I Quarter-finalist in New England Prep School League.

Wellesley BAYS

2000-2002 – Starting Right Wing, Fall and Spring Team
2002 – BAYS Division Champs
2001 – BAYS Division Champs

References

(Name), Soccer Coach (St. Paul’s)
(Name), College Adviser
(Name), Soccer Coach (Wellesley BAYS)
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Visual Arts
The following procedures and suggestions are intended as guidelines for anyone who has done a significant amount of visual artwork while at St. Paul's School. We strongly recommend that you create a portfolio of your best work as part of your college application, regardless of whether you intend to pursue art in college. What you have done to date will set you apart from many other applicants, demonstrating an unusual talent and skill. What you show them, if chosen and presented carefully, can only be to your advantage.

Format
1. Some colleges may differ, but most will be looking for a selection of slides documenting your work, usually no more than twenty submitted in a slide file page.
2. Each slide should be labeled with your name and a number that corresponds to a typed list accompanying your slides. The list should have a title for each slide, identification of the media, an indication of size, and a brief description of the project or work.
3. You should also include a brief (half page, typed) artist's statement that describes your interests and investment in the visual arts.
4. Other formats are possible, and may in some cases be advisable, depending on the scope and type of your work and the college you are considering. Consult the college advisers, your adviser, and your art teachers.

Procedure
1. Collect all of your work at school, including sketchbooks, finished pieces, and things you may have done outside of your coursework at St. Paul's. You should start collecting your work as soon as you start producing it, and keep track of it.
2. Contact a member of the Visual Arts Department to be your mentor for this process (probably one who knows your work the best) and arrange to store your work (most likely in Hargate). Review your collected works with that faculty member, considering which pieces may be most important and representative of your achievements. You should select about twice the number of pieces that you may finally include in your portfolio.
   Note: Most students photograph their own work, but you can hire a professional photographer. A professional will charge either by the slide or by the time, so the more you ask the photographer to shoot, the more it will cost you, but it is not always easy to identify which works will look best in slide format.
3. Arrange an appointment with a photographer through your faculty contact, or ask the Head of our Art Department to advise you—they may recommend an alternative.
4. It is best if you can arrange to be with the photographer, at least at the beginning of the session, in order to make clear what you want, possibly to help with the set-up. It is your responsibility to be sure the portfolio is accessible to the photographer and is clearly defined as to what you want included. The photographer will arrange for obtaining the film and for processing.
5. Payment must be arranged directly with the photographer before he/she has photographed your work. After the photographer has billed you for the total, he/she must receive full payment before the slides are given to you.
6. Once you have received the slides, arrange to meet with your faculty mentor once again, review the work, and make a selection that seems most appropriate. Your selection should be your choice, but take into account the suggestions offered by the faculty member, as their goal is to help you to present your talents most effectively.

7. Prepare your slides, the list, and your artist’s statement.

8. If you are submitting a portfolio to more than one college, you will need to have duplicates made, which should be done once you have made your final selection. These duplicates can be made by any of several photo-processing firms accessible in Concord or in your hometown.

**NOTE:** If you are not applying early you can delay the process somewhat, especially if you are currently enrolled in a course and producing works. The work you have finished should be shot as soon as you can arrange it—avoid the last minute rush where possible. If you have a significant body of work by the spring of your Fifth Form year, you should consider having it photographed at that time. Use the summer months to develop and organize your portfolio.

**Performing Arts**

**Music**—The following procedures and suggestions are intended as guidelines for anyone who is an accomplished musician. Again, we strongly recommend that you create an audiotape of your best work as part of your college application, regardless of whether you intend to pursue music in college. What you have done to date will set you apart from many other applicants, demonstrating an unusual talent and skill. What you show them, if chosen and presented carefully, can only be to your advantage.

1. In the absence of a live audition (typically reserved for conservatories), an audio or videotape is the best way to present your musical talent. You should speak with Mr. Seaton and/or your music teacher to determine the best pieces to select (usually no more than three), and the best time and place to record them.

2. Make several copies of the tape to send, since they will not be returned to you.

3. You should also include a brief (half page, typed) artist’s statement that describes your interests and investment in the performing arts.

4. Your tape should be labeled with your full name and sent to the admissions office with your application in a large manila envelope. The admissions staff sends it to the appropriate faculty member in the music department to be rated then the tape will be returned to the admissions office.

**Dance**—In the absence of a live audition (which is possible at several colleges), videotape is the best way to present your dance talent. You should speak with Ms. Wright or Ms. Milano to determine the best pieces to select (again, no more than three), and the best time and place to record them.

Repeat steps 2-4 above.

**Drama**—Again, in the absence of a live audition, a video is the best way to demonstrate your dramatic talent. You should speak with your drama teacher about the details of videotaping performances.

Remember to make several copies of the tape, as it will not be returned to you, and also to include an artist’s statement, as described previously.
SAMPLE LETTER/E-MAIL TO A COACH OR SPECIAL INTEREST PERSON

Date

Name of Receiver
Title
Name of School
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Coach (or Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr., Rev., etc.) (Name of Person),

I am a Fifth Former (junior) at St. Paul’s School and have heard about the team (or program) at your school. Would you please send me literature about your program? I am planning to visit your campus this summer and will call you when my visiting arrangements are finalized. I hope I have an opportunity to meet with you this summer.

Enclosed please find a brief summary of my achievements.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Address
City, State, Zip Code
e-mail address
SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORTS

Transcripts and School Letters of Recommendation

In your application materials for each college, you will usually find forms to give to the College Office called the Secondary School Report (SSR) and the Mid-Year School Report (MY—we only need the MY if you are applying to a college that has a deadline prior to January 1). Additionally, St. Paul’s has its own Secondary School Report (SPS SSR) that we use in place of the college’s SSR. These forms authorize us to send your SPS transcript (and a copy of your previous high school transcript, if applicable) and your college adviser’s recommendation letter to colleges. We will not send transcripts or letters to a college without an official SSR. If a college does not provide you with these forms, then you must submit the SPS SSR—be sure we know the mailing addresses and the deadlines.

You are responsible for filling out your section of these forms and submitting them directly to Mrs. Greenfield for review. Please do not leave these forms in your adviser’s post office box, under or taped to any door, or in the Faculty Room boxes. Unlike teachers, the College Office does not require envelopes from you.

The SPS SSRS and MYs are due in our office in early November. (You will be notified of exact date.) Forms for Early applications are due early in October.

Other Documents

In addition to the Secondary School Reports, transcripts, and your college adviser’s letter, we also send a bulletin entitled “Notes Concerning Courses” outlining by academic department which courses are considered advanced, and which prepare for the Advanced Placement examinations.

Teacher Recommendations

General Process—Some colleges do not require any recommendations (however, they will accept them); others may require one, two, or three. Some colleges will request teacher recommendations from specified academic disciplines, for example English, mathematics, or science. Others may seek a “peer” recommendation. In each case, consider carefully whom you will ask to write on your behalf. A good question to ask your teacher is: “Do you know my work and me well enough to make a positive evaluation?”

When you have decided whom you will be asking, talk to the teacher(s) as far in advance of the colleges’ deadlines as possible (at the very least one month prior). Humanities teachers, particularly, will be overburdened with writing, so it is best to approach them in the spring of your Fifth Form year. It is helpful for teachers to have some knowledge of you outside of the classroom, so include a summary of your activities (a photocopy of your Sixth Form Fall Term Questionnaire is ideal). After teachers agree to write for you, provide them with an addressed (typed), stamped envelope with the recommendation form placed inside the envelope. Leave the return address blank; this space is for your teacher’s address. Make certain you have filled out your portion of each recommendation beforehand.

A Suggestion—if you have several recommendations for one teacher to complete, place all the envelopes in one large, manila envelope and write the name of the colleges and their deadlines
on the outside. You should give these to them personally. Keep in mind that a smile and a
genuine “thank-you” go a long way!

To Waive or Not To Waive
You will be happy to know that you do indeed have certain rights as a part of this process. The
College Office has a statement by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, a
group that represents the school counselors, college admissions, and financial aid officers, that
you ought to read since it states your rights and responsibilities.

On waiving your rights—you should consider waiving your rights because doing so suggests to
the reader that the recommendation has been written objectively.

When you waive your rights, you are stating that if you attend the institution you will not at-
ttempt to view the full contents of your college application—specifically, recommendations from
teachers and your college adviser.

When you do not waive your rights, you may, upon attending that institution, have access to the
full contents of your college application, including recommendations. You do not have access to
applications to colleges to which you are not attending, however.

A Little Etiquette Goes A Long Way
Just as you make every effort to maintain your own unique aura of grace and respect among your
contacts at the colleges, you should also be aware of the effort your teachers and advisers at SPS
make on your behalf, and treat them accordingly. Because we live and learn together in the close
community of St. Paul’s, it is sometimes easy to overlook just how much your teachers are doing
for you and numerous other students. Keep in mind that you are not the only responsibility of
your recommender. Be thoughtful of other deadlines and responsibilities that s/he faces daily
and act accordingly

Other Helpful Tips
• Academic recommendations should be written by teachers who have taught you recently
(preferably no earlier than Fifth Form), and who know you well. If there is someone in the
community with whom you are very close, ask them to write a separate, personal recommen-
dation on their own letterhead.
• Try to balance your academic profile by having a recommendation from the Humanities
division as well as one from the math or science department.
• If you have struggled in a particular discipline over the years, but have worked hard to im-
prove and impressed a teacher or two along the way, you might think about asking that
teacher to write an additional recommendation to address your experience. The more infor-
mation an admissions committee has when presented with a mediocre or poor grade perfor-
mance, the better.
• If you are wondering about whether or not to ask a non-academic person (i.e. friend of fam-
ily, former boss, etc.) to write a supplemental recommendation, ask yourself this question:
“What can this person say about me that no one else has said?” If you can come up with a
good answer, go ahead and ask. What you want to avoid is a folder full of recommendations
that are repetitious and void of meaning.
FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

For many families, a key piece of the college admissions process may center on financial aid. In the next few pages, we identify some of the important steps of applying for aid, explain how colleges factor financial aid into admissions and award packages, and describe how the typical financial aid package might be developed. These policies will vary from school to school, and we urge you to read the materials provided by each college and encourage you to contact their offices if you have questions. In fact, any college financial aid office is an invaluable resource. Feel free not only to call them with questions, but also to make appointments to speak with them in person.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Need-Blind
A process where the admission decision is separate (blind) from the financial aid process. The admissions application is evaluated, a decision is made, and those accepted are then sent to the financial aid office for review. A growing number of schools that are need-blind, however, do not have the resources to meet the full need of the class they have accepted.

Need-Aware
A process where the admission decision can be sensitive to the financial need of the applicant. A growing number of schools with limited resources have become much more honest in admitting that they must look at their budget carefully when accepting a freshman class. In most cases, this will affect a handful of applicants, and students placed on a wait list.

Gapping
A process of admitting a student while providing a financial package that does not fully meet (gaps) your calculated need.

SCHOLARSHIPS
The College Office frequently receives literature on scholarships. We also maintain and post a scholarship database on the bulletin board outside the College Office. This database is updated as we receive information from colleges and other sources. Speak with us if you would like to browse through our scholarship files. If you would like to be nominated for a scholarship, see your college adviser.
APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Each school will have specific requirements for financial aid, so it is vital that you read the information from each application. In most cases, this may include a form as part of the application process, or a request to fill out one of several forms:

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
FAFSA forms become available between November and December of your Sixth Form year. All students applying for any federal financial aid must file this form as soon as possible after January 1st of the application year. Analysis of the data on this form will determine eligibility for Federal Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Federal Work Study, Federal Perkins Loans, Stafford Loans (subsidized and non-subsidized), and other federal and, in some cases, state programs. Many states, while often requiring their own forms, will also require the FAFSA to award state grants to students. Since federal aid is a key component of most awards, it is critical that this is filed in a timely manner. You can also file the FAFSA on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov. There is no cost to process the FAFSA.

CSS® (College Scholarship Service) Profile
Separate from the FAFSA, each college may have its own financial aid form which is used to help their financial aid offices determine a student's eligibility for the institution's own funds. The College Scholarship Service (CSS), a branch of The College Board, developed the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® to help streamline and start the financial aid application process earlier in the fall. PROFILE does the work of gathering financial information requested from various colleges and universities, and then sends the customized application to you. You and your parent/s then complete the PROFILE application and return it to CSS at least one week before the earliest priority-filing deadline specified by your schools and programs. If you are required to complete any supplemental forms, you must send them directly to the schools and programs. Paper versions of the PROFILE registration forms are usually available in the College Office in September. You can also register for the application on-line at www.collegeboard.com, or you can register via the toll-free PROFILE number at 1-800-778-6888. The basic PROFILE registration fee for the 2004-2005 college school year is $7.00 by phone ($5.00 on-line) plus $18.00 per college.

In addition to PROFILE, families may be asked to submit one or both of the following:

Non-custodial Parent's Statement—As stated above, this supplement, once completed, should be sent directly to the colleges’ financial aid offices.

Business/Farm Supplement—A supplement to PROFILE required by some colleges if a parent is self-employed or a farmer.
Should I Apply For Financial Aid?
If you and your family cannot afford to pay for four years of college without assistance from outside resources, then by all means you should apply for financial aid. There is a debate in many circles as to where college admissions is heading in an effort to assist students in their ability to afford college. Stories have appeared in the media that accuse colleges of playing games with aid, often raising the question of how much applying for aid will affect a student's chances for admission. In order to be clear about a school's policies, and help you make intelligent decisions about where to apply, ask any or all of the following questions when visiting schools:

“Does the college practice a need-blind admission policy?”
“What percentage of students is receiving financial aid?”
“What percentage of students had their full need met?”
“What percentage of the funds was need-based?”
“What percentage of the funds (if any) was merit based?”
“Do the same financial aid procedures and policies apply for the entire four years?”
“If my family has more than one student in college, will that be taken into consideration when calculating my family contribution? What about another student in boarding school?”
“If the cost of college goes up, will my aid go up accordingly?”
“Can the school's financial aid be used to cover the costs of study abroad programs?”
“How are outside scholarships handled? Are they credited against the loan component of my aid, the grant component, or the family contribution?”
“Do I need a certain grade-point average to keep my institutional grant?”
“Are emergency funds available for short-term loans?”
“Are there any tuition payment plans that will allow me and my parents to spread out our payments?”
“What is the policy with regard to non-custodial parents and step-parents? Are they expected to contribute if financially able?”
“What is the typical financial aid package?”
“How much indebtedness can I expect after four years?”
“How many hours a week will I have to work to fulfill the work-study portion of my aid package?”

Should I Apply Early If I Need Financial Aid?
By applying Early, you limit your opportunities to compare financial aid packages between schools. Since most of the schools our students are attending traditionally try to meet full need, our experience has been that the package in the early round has been no different than those awarded in the spring. The Ivy League schools and many similar selective schools have gone on record to say that no differences exist in the manner in which early and regular aid is awarded. Think carefully and consult with your parents and college adviser!
The Financial Aid Package

Financial aid packages come in all shapes and forms. Many schools fail to give you the bottom line of what you will pay when all costs are calculated. Take the time to go back and see what the basic costs of the school are, add up what the various components of the aid package come out to, and see if it will work for you and your family. Once you have sorted through the various packages, you will be ready to make that determination.

(EFC) Expected Family Contribution—is determined after income and assets are reviewed. Allowances are made for the number of family members, the number of children in college, necessary expenses, etc. Home equity is not considered when applying for federal aid; however, it is considered by colleges requiring the CSS PROFILE when they consider distributing the college’s own funds. Typically, you are asked to contribute a portion of your personal savings and other assets. You are also expected to contribute a certain amount based on what you could realistically earn during the summer, whether or not you actually choose to work. Should you receive merit-based awards from organizations outside of the college, these are considered as part of your available resources and may be applied against the self-help portion of your aid package. Consideration is also given to special financial circumstances (illness, older parents approaching retirement, or special educational needs). Be certain that colleges are aware of any unusual circumstances that may exist in your family.

Please note: Colleges may handle situations differently, in which parents are separated, divorced, and/or remarried. For example, some colleges take into consideration the income and assets of the step-parent with whom the student lives. Others do not. Federal fund eligibility (determined by the FAFSA) is based on “household” income only—which can include a ste-parent and exclude a biological parent. Always ask and/or read the fine print!

Usual College Break down for Awards

Self-Help—based on the FAFSA. This may include an opportunity to work on campus through a work-study program, Federal (Perkins or Stafford) loans, and/or school loans.

Grants—if the college meets 100% of your need, the remaining amount can be filled with “free” money, or grants. These are a combination of Federal grants, or grants from the actual funds of the college.

Merit Awards—may also be a part of an award in the form of a grant that goes beyond the actual need of a student. It may even be awarded to a student not applying for financial aid in the hope of attracting top scholars to that school.

We have seen discrepancies between financial aid packages. Do not be afraid to discuss these with both our office and the college financial aid office before making a final decision.

International Students

International students applying for aid at American colleges are not eligible for awards given through the FAFSA program, and as a result, find themselves in a much more competitive group for aid from the college’s institutional resources. There are a number of schools that attempt to award more aid to international students with need, and we will do our best to help you identify these resources.
STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized testing is an important factor in admissions decisions at most highly selective colleges and universities. A few institutions have downplayed the importance of scores, and some have eliminated test requirements entirely, but these institutions are in the minority. At most colleges standardized testing still matters.

We have found that students who plan carefully and familiarize themselves with the test format through use of practice materials are able to attain scores that accurately reflect their school performance. We want you to understand the testing requirements and, just as importantly, to keep testing in perspective.

(PSAT/NMSQT) PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST AND NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST

This test is (20-80 score scale) two hours, administered in October of the Fourth and Fifth Form years. However, scores from the Fifth Form testing are the ones used for National Merit selections. In the spring of the Sixth Form year, finalists will be notified if they have been awarded a National Merit Scholarship.

The PSAT helps familiarize you with the standardized testing format. When you receive a copy of your PSAT scores, you will also receive the test questions, a copy of your answers, and an answer key. The results you receive are a worthwhile tool in assessing areas of weakness as you look forward to taking the SAT. Generally speaking, PSAT results will give you a rough projection of what your SAT-I scores will be.

SAT-I: REASONING TEST

This test is (200-800 score scale) three hours, administered from October through June of each year on nationally determined test dates.

All students should take the SAT-I either once or twice in the winter and/or spring of their Fifth Form year. Most students will repeat the SAT-I once during the fall of the Sixth Form year. The total number of times a student takes the test depends on his/her level of satisfaction with the scores. In our experience, however, three times is often a charm; after that, scores do not usually improve appreciably unless there is some kind of formal test preparation. Regardless of how many times you take the SAT-I, the colleges will receive all of the scores; you cannot choose which scores to send. Most colleges focus on a student’s best verbal score and best math score, even if they are achieved on different testing days.

When To Take—January and/or April of Fifth Form; again in fall of Sixth Form, if necessary, particularly if you enroll in a test preparation class over the summer.

SAT-II: SUBJECT TESTS

This test is (200-800 score scale) one hour per academic subject, up to three tests per administration, administered from October through June of each year on nationally determined test dates.
In addition to the SAT-I, nearly all students will need to have taken three SAT-II: Subject Tests by the time they apply to college. SAT-II Subject Tests measure achievement in a particular academic discipline. Not all colleges require these tests, but nearly all of the colleges St. Paul’s students applied to last year did. Decisions about which Subject Tests to take are often the most complicated decisions for students to make since the tests are largely curriculum-driven and, thus, different for each student. Further confusion arises because there are 22 different tests to choose from, and some of the tests are best taken early in one’s high school career, long before most students are thinking about college plans. For example, a strong biology student should take the Biology Subject Test at the end of the course, which often falls at the end of Fourth Form year. Our best advice: ask your teacher what s/he thinks of your ability to score well on a given Subject Test.

**Guidelines for SAT-II Subject Tests**

Following are our general recommendations for taking SAT-II Subject Tests. **It is absolutely critical that you discuss your plans with your teachers!** They know best what your academic strengths and weaknesses are:

**What to Take**—At least Writing, Math IC or IIC, and an optional third (Language, Science, Literature, or History) always check the specific college requirements!

**When to Take**—Preferably at the end of the academic course (i.e. May and/or June; except for Languages with Listening (which are only given in November), and ELPT are given in November and January.

**Writing or Literature**—anytime is fine, but Fifth Form spring is ideal.

**Math IC** (C=calculator)—after Algebra 2 and Geometry, sometimes Precalculus (if you are a marginal ‘H’ or ‘HP’ student).

**Math IIC**—after Precalculus (if you are a strong ‘H’ or ‘HH’ student), Precalculus Honors, and Calculus.

**Sciences**—immediately following the course (check with your teacher!)

**Languages**—usually after the third year of study.

**Languages with Listening**—if you are fluent in the language, after a year abroad or summer travel in the native country, if you are at an advanced level of study, with the advice of your teacher.

**History**—Speak with your Humanities teacher.

**Note:** The best resources for specific information on the SAT-I and SAT-II Tests are the SAT Program publications: *Registration Bulletin, Taking the SAT-I Reasoning Test,* and *Taking the SAT-II Subject Tests*, located on the wall outside the College Office.

**Handling Your SAT Scores**

Please refer to Page 2 (inside cover) of the SAT Registration Bulletin for detailed instructions, addresses, telephone, and fax numbers for the following:
Sending Score Reports

You can have your scores sent to colleges several ways: include college codes on your Test Registration Form; use the Correction Form (attached to your SAT admission ticket), or use the Additional Report Request Form (mailed to you with your admission ticket), on-line service (credit card required); or by telephone (again, credit card required).

NON-STANDARDIZED TESTING

Most tests that colleges require for admission such as the SAT-I, SAT-II, ACT, or AP subject tests can be administered in a modified format. These modifications to the test administration process are only available to students with documented disabilities. That is, the student must have a documented learning disability or physically handicapping condition to begin the eligibility process. Such modifications can include extended time, large print test materials, as well as administration by audiocassettes or the use of Braille.

There is a rigorous eligibility process for students with disabilities who wish to take these tests with modifications. Eligibility is determined by a process established by the test publisher, and coordinated through St. Paul’s School’s Student Support Services. The specific test publisher ultimately makes the eligibility decision and the decision is based upon certain specific types of documentation. If you have any questions concerning test modifications or eligibility qualifications, please contact the staff at Clark House. They will be happy to answer any questions you may have about non-standardized test administration.

AP—ADVANCED PLACEMENT

This test is (1-5 score scale) three hours per academic discipline, administered in May of each year according to a nationally determined test schedule.

The Advanced Placement Examinations (AP) are optional in the college admissions process. The designated purpose of AP exams is to provide opportunities for students to gain college credit or advanced placement in college courses. Teachers will discuss with their classes whether taking the AP exam in their subjects is appropriate, and guide individuals who seek advice in making a decision. Classroom teachers also handle registrations for these exams prior to spring vacation. Although APs were not designed as admissions tools, they are often used to document a student’s strength in a particular subject. When a student scores a ‘4’ or a ‘5’ on an AP exam, the college adviser highlights it in his/her recommendation for that student. Once you select which college you will attend, you should send official AP scores to the college for credit and/or advanced placement.

ACT—AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM

This test is (0-36 score scale) 2 hours 55 min., administered October through June each year according to a nationally determined test schedule.

The ACT is an alternative test to the SAT-I and is accepted at nearly every college in the country. Occasionally students find that they outperform their SAT-I score when taking the ACT. A handful of SPS students take the test each year. It covers English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. SPS is not a test center for the ACT. Speak with your college adviser if you are interested.
TOEFL—TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
This test is (40-300 score scale) administered at more than 300 test centers around the world—the most convenient test center to St. Paul's is in Boston. The test has four sections: Listening, Structure, Reading and Writing. Obtain the TOEFL Information Bulletin in the College Office. They also have a web site: http://www.toefl.org
The TOEFL is taken by students whose native language is not English, and is often helpful as a supplement to the SAT verbal score. Many colleges require this test of international applicants.

TEST PREPARATION
Printed Guide Books
For additional practice materials, we recommend 10 Real SAT’s: The College Board’s Official Guide to the SAT. This guide contains ten complete versions of the SAT-I for practice, and is comprehensive, helpful, and easy to read. For study guides to SAT-II Subject Tests, we recommend The Official Guide to the SAT-II Subject Tests, also published by the College Board. Virtually anything published by The College Board is a good bet.
There are several other guidebooks and computer software programs available today, but we hesitate to recommend one over the other since they change in content so quickly. Some are better than others, but the effectiveness of any resource depends largely upon your learning style and level of self-discipline.
We recommend taking any test preparation classes during the summer months when you have more time to take full advantage of its content.
“Do I have to do community service to be more attractive to colleges?”
Not if you are doing it simply to look good to colleges. It is far better to pursue one of your true passions. It is always nice, however, to give back to society simply for the sake of doing a good thing.

“Do I have to take four years of English to be competitive? of math? language? science?”
If you do not meet the minimum requirements/recommendations published by each college, then, yes, you are putting yourself at a competitive disadvantage at that institution. Usually, this means, four years of English, at least three of math and science, and work completed through the third level of a language. We understand your desire to focus on your strengths by doubling or tripling up in one or two academic disciplines, but colleges are looking for broadly educated high school students, not students who have majored in one area already. Stay broad while also pursuing your interests, and always be well versed with what colleges are recommending that you study.

“Will colleges care if I drop a course after December or once I have been admitted early?”
Yes. Consistency and commitment are qualities that every college admires and expects from students who are supposed to be among the best in the nation.

“Is it better to specify a major or program of study on the application or to simply write ‘undecided’?”
If you declare Biology (or any science), Engineering, or Business, you should have the standardized testing and grades in those disciplines to back it up. These majors attract some of the strongest students in the country, so you will have stiff competition right away. If you are certain that those are the areas of interest or specialization for you, speak with your adviser before pigeonholing yourself. If not, declaring ‘Undecided’ or writing down more than one academic interest is fine. College admissions personnel understand that nearly every college student changes his or her mind about a major at least once—that is why many colleges do not require official declaration of a major generally until the junior year.

“Isn’t big better, even though small is more personal?”
Better for whom? It all depends on you and your needs. Access to faculty has more to do with the nature of the place than size. If no one cares, then 500 students are too many. If most care about you, or are friendly, then a mega-university (20,000+ students) is not too large. Large institutions naturally offer more courses and more activities, but may also offer the opportunity to take courses with 500 other students, too. Look closely at what small institutions have to offer these days—you might be surprised.
“After SPS, don’t I need to branch out and try a big place?”
Maybe. Take a look around the colleges you visit. Most that you will consider are well over three times the size of SPS, and a college of 1,500 will have about 400 new students every year. Moreover, with any size college there are nearly endless opportunities which you ought to explore: to volunteer in town, on the campus; to meet new people, to go elsewhere for a semester or a year; to broaden your horizons.

“Isn’t the college admissions game like the lottery: if I apply to ten or more I’m bound to get into one?”
If all ten colleges are similar in their degree of competitiveness, you may receive ten letters saying ‘sorry.’ Writing applications is a difficult and time-consuming task. Write them as an individual endeavor, not a mass process. If you apply correctly to six colleges that are reasonable for you, you will probably be successful with at least half; applying to ten doesn’t necessarily mean you will gain admission to five. It is your care and prior work, and the listening to advice that will help you gain the success you want.

“Then, my grades are the only thing the colleges care about?”
Of course, colleges look closely at your courses and your record, and the courses you intend to take in all three of the Sixth Form terms. They also consider your school activities, the type of service you perform, the sports you play; in short, how you have spent your time over your high school years.

“If I was disciplined in the Third Form, do I have to report it to colleges?”
Yes. If a college asks the question about your disciplinary record, you are expected to answer honestly. If you have ever sat before the Discipline Committee, then you have been “disciplined.” Understand that the question applies to your entire high school career—Third Form through graduation. (See pages 5 and 6)
AFTER THE DECISIONS

GETTING IN
Step One Jump for joy! (but be sensitive to other students)
Step Two Call home!
Step Three NOTIFY THE COLLEGE OFFICE IN WRITING!!!!!
Step Four Accept the offer, if you wish to attend; deny the offer if you do not.
Step Five Disciplinary infractions or academic performances that are a departure from your record could put you on probation at a college freshman year, or, worse, could cause the college to revoke your acceptance.

NOTE: The deadline for accepting an offer of admission is May 1 (generally a postmark date). You may accept at only one school! However, you should respond to all acceptances—good manners still count. Most colleges want a deposit—usually of several hundred dollars—with your acceptance. Read the fine print...

Financial aid information may come with your acceptance letters. Sometimes those letters are sent separately—allow a few days before becoming too anxious. However, if it gets to be late April and you still have not received a financial aid package, be sure to let us know.

You may want to revisit a college. Talk with your college adviser. Try to miss as little school as possible.

Finally, do not make quick selections if you are fortunate enough to have several college choices. Talk with your parents and adviser.

GETTING WAITLISTED
If you wish to remain on one or more waitlist, you should:
Step One Send the response card back immediately. Colleges are always interested to know how interested you are in them. If they are going to go to the wait list to admit more students—they will go for the ones they believe will attend.
Step Two Write a personal letter to the college admissions office emphasizing how much you hope to attend, why you think their school is the best place for you, and highlighting any new accomplishments (including better grades) that they may not know about.
Step Three Notify the College Office in writing of your plans, and schedule a meeting to discuss strategies with your college adviser as soon as possible. Your college adviser will continue to play a vital role in lobbying on your behalf.
Step Four Think about anyone else—faculty, family, friend, or peer—who might write an additional letter of support.
Offers of admission from the waiting list usually occur after May 1 and can go on into the summer months, so be sure to accept one college’s offer by the May 1 deadline to secure a space somewhere. If you are admitted from a waiting list later and decide to attend, you need to advise the college whose offer you had initially accepted, and forfeit your deposit there.

GETTING DENIED
It’s never easy to face rejection, but this, too, is a part of the college application process, unfortunately. Once you have been denied, make an appointment with your college adviser to discuss any issues you might have. She/He may be able to provide the insight that can help to ease the pain and assist you should you try to apply to college again later. Rarely, if ever, are negative admissions decisions changed after the letters have been mailed.

INTERIM YEAR
Increasingly, students are taking time off after high school. They may travel, work, or become involved in an organized program or series of organized programs. Regardless of what you might choose to do, a year off is a terrific opportunity to recharge your batteries and/or try something you never again might have the opportunity to do.

Many colleges now ask on the application if a student plans to defer a year. Be honest. It will not affect your chances of admission. In fact, colleges support the notion of a year off because students subsequently enter their freshman year with life experience, better perspective, and, perhaps most importantly, a refreshed hunger and excitement for learning.

The College Office can put you in touch with people who specialize in coordinating this sort of thing (for a fee, of course!) and we have some material that might help you get started. If you do decide to take a year off, you still need to respond to offers of admission. Be sure to determine—before May 1—the procedure for requesting ‘deferred admission’ from the college you have decided to attend.