



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026



ADMISSIONS NEWS!

The Common Application is now open for the 2026-2027 season! Let the fun begin!

Once you've completed the general Common Application that goes to all of your colleges, you should start finding the supplemental essays that you might need to complete. Even if you think you know what supplements you have to write (because they don't seem to change for some colleges), please double check on the Common App because many colleges tinker with their supplements every year. You'll notice that many colleges have removed their supplements this year, and others will not be updating their supplements until mid-August or early September. Sigh.

Reminder to parents: Your children are the ones who should fill out the Common App, and they're the ones who should write the essays. If they have questions about filling out the Common App, please have them refer to this extensive [document](#). I'll go through the key points of this document next month, but I want to provide some guidance now for those who want to get a jumpstart on filling it out or who may have questions about how to fill it out correctly.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MARIST COLLEGE

- Location: Poughkeepsie, NY
- # of Undergrads: 4,919
- Acceptance Rate: 63%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 16:1
- Returning Freshmen: 86%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 84%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Beautiful campus located right on the banks of the Hudson River; founded as a Catholic institution, but it is now completely non-denominational! Really!
- Known for great fashion design, sports communications/broadcasting, business.
- No classes larger than 35. Public speaking requirement. Great study abroad programs.
- Lots of internships in NYC; lots of Computer Science internships at IBM (20 min away); many professors have professional experience in their fields
- Collaborative feel; physical spaces allow to students studying/hanging together
- Highly regarded Learning Support program (mainly for ADHD and dyslexia)
- 94% live on campus; apartment style options for upperclassmen
- Division 1 sports teams + 3,000 students participate in club/intramural teams
- For those of you concerned about financial health: they're in a solid financial position.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: VASSAR COLLEGE

- Location: Poughkeepsie, NY
- # of Undergrads: 2,436
- Acceptance Rate: 19%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 7:1
- Returning Freshmen: 94%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 0%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Beautiful campus also located in Poughkeepsie (but not near the Hudson River).
- Attracts curious, creative, progressive people. Active LGBTQ+ community.
- Traditional strengths in fine arts and humanities are matched by solid offerings in STEM.
- Prides itself on curricular flexibility and diversity; no core curriculum or distribution reqs, though a first-year writing seminar, a quant course, and demonstration of foreign language proficiency are all required.
- State of the art physics building; observatory with the largest telescope in the northeast,
- Popular majors are political science, psych, econ, and bio. Drama, film, art, neuroscience are strengths. Small classes and tutorials are the norm; exams given under honor system.
- 45% study abroad. Most participate in internships or fieldwork; solid career center.
- 97% live on campus; new dining hall with expanded options. Lots of college traditions.
- No Greek life; social life revolves around campus films, concerts, theater & dance performances, and parties in senior apartments.
- Div 3 sports; 45% of students participate in club and intramural sports.

RIISING JUNIORS: START VISITING SOME COLLEGES!

Getting on a few college campuses at the end of the summer or in early fall (ideally when students are there so that you can get a good read on the vibe) is probably the most important thing you can do. It is very challenging to make a wise college list without having some context. So try to visit a mix of colleges (large public universities, medium-sized colleges, smaller liberal arts colleges) in a variety of locations (urban, suburban, rural). Don't worry at this point about which colleges might end up on your list. Just start with size and location. And then start doing some real soul-searching about what you might want in a college. Do you want a contained campus with a green quad? Do you want a great college town? How well do you want to know your professors? I hear about too many students and families who build their college lists based off of what colleges their friends are applying to, rather than thinking about what THEY want.

RIISING SENIORS: MAKE SOME REAL HEADWAY THIS SUMMER!

Most of you have a month or so before school starts again. I can't impress upon you enough how worthwhile it is to get a ton of college admissions work done before you head back for your senior year. Remember: you're probably going to be taking the most rigorous courseload you've taken so far, AND you'll have one more AP class on your schedule: AP College Applications! I'm only sort of kidding. The fall of senior year is A LOT! Students are amazed each year when their teachers schedule major tests right when apps are due!

Here are the key things that you should do before school starts:

- Finalize that college list. Follow the colleges on your list on Instagram; you can learn a ton from Insta Stories about how colleges welcome students back in the fall, and you can get a close look at the students who attend and how they spend their time.
- Contemplate your admissions strategy. Will you decide to apply Early Decision? (That's the one where if you get in, you're going). ED is great for colleges because they get to fill their seats early and often; it's not great for teens who change their minds constantly. But the bump in acceptance rates is real, so for families who don't have much financial pressure, it's a good thing to consider.
- Keep working on your personal statement. Tell a great, compelling story, and then explain why it matters. Finalize it before your summer ends.
- Keep working on your activities list (use a spreadsheet to lay it all out--ensuring you're within the miniscule character count--and then copy&paste it into the Common App).
- Get to work on any supplemental essays you have. Double check on the Common App that you're working on the latest essays.
- Will you be submitting a creative supplement (eg, a music supplement or an art portfolio)? Get that done before school starts too!

Don't underestimate how busy you'll be in the fall! What's more: you'll do better work this summer when you're not distracted by all of that challenging fall schoolwork!

RIISING COLLEGE FIRST-YEARS: MAKING THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Many of you will be HEADING TO COLLEGE this month! Woohoo! It probably feels a little daunting, scary, and exciting! Let yourself feel all the feels, and work to manage your expectations. There will be hard times, but they will pass. You may feel lonely and overwhelmed at times, but know that you're not the only one. Have patience during this transition. It can take time!

Here are a few things I recommend that you do when you get to campus:

- Try to meet someone new every day. You should stay in touch with old friends, but be sure to make room and time for new ones.
- Go to the activities fair, and join clubs and organizations. Getting engaged and tied to groups from the get-go can make a huge difference!
- Go to faculty office hours regularly. Get to know your professors or TAs. DO NOT WAIT until you are struggling! Don't be shy. They want to help you!
- Find 3 places on campus that make you happy and visit them regularly.
- Find 3 people on campus who you enjoy and who make you feel comfortable. Grab meals with them. Head to the library with them.
- Resist the urge to text your parents with every problem you face. See if you can figure things out first.
- If you do reach out to your parents with a problem or issue, please remember to circle back and tell them how things resolved and how you are. We parents keep on worrying until we know we can stop!

One more thing... The book "College Success Guaranteed: 5 Rules to Make It Happen" by Malcolm Gauld has very wise advice:

- Go To Class (you'd be amazed by how many college kids think they can get away with this)
- Study At Least 3 Hours a Day For 5 Days a Week
- Commit To Something
- Get a Mentor
- Procrastination Kills.
- I'll add a few others: Get Engaged & Invested and Be Open to New Friendships!

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I help students and their families navigate the college admissions process while decreasing confusion and stress. I empower students to figure out who they are and where they belong, and I provide structure, insight, and enthusiasm as they apply to colleges that are the best fit academically, socially, and financially. Contact me for a 30 minute complimentary session to learn more!



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