

Edition:
2020
2021



College Admissions Handbook

High School Guidance Office

Dear Parents, Students, & Families of SCA,

The counseling department at SCA is dedicated to assisting students in the achievement of their maximum academic, personal, and spiritual potential through Christ.

As your School Counselor, I am honored to serve you. I look forward to working closely with you as you pursue the goals and dreams ahead of you.

The college search and selection process can be exciting, daunting, confusing, and overwhelming, and most of all rewarding. For this reason, this handbook has been compiled as a resource for this new journey. Please be assured I will do everything within my power to help you transition from high school student to college scholar.

I strongly encourage you to make use of all the resources available through SCA. Parents are welcome to make appointments with me to discuss college planning at any time during the year. I will always have an individual one-on-one planning session with each high school Junior and Senior student every year they are enrolled in SCA. Informative parent meetings are also held at the beginning of the year to keep parents updated on the college search process.

It is my hope that this booklet will help make college planning and admissions easier. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

In His Service,

Mrs. Gabrielle Gomez
School Counselor
ggomez@scacrusaders.com

Counseling Department Mission Statement

The mission of Seffner Christian Academy's counseling office is to assist students in choosing classes that would enhance their progress towards academic excellence, maintaining grades that enable students to obtain scholarships, making wise decisions in desiring and seeking God's will as they plan their careers realistically, and developing interpersonal relationships based on the principles of God's Word.

Chapter

1

Guidance Policies and Procedures

Guidance Appointments

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tudents may visit the School Counselor during the school day depending on his/her class schedule and counselor availability. Periodically, the counselor will set up appointment times to meet with students individually to discuss goals and plans. It is vital that each student attends his/her college planning session.

Parents may set up a counseling appointment by email for an appointment time at ggomez@scacrusaders.com.

Expectations

The Counselor will:

- Be available and accessible to students and parents
- Not dictate the goals, plans, or desires of the student
- Encourage students to attend colleges that not only give them a valuable education but help them grow personally and spiritually.
- Meet with parents and students
- Write honest letters of recommendation for each student
- Help the student understand the expectations of colleges and universities
- Not get the students admitted into college nor keep them out. However, the counselor's experience and advice will assist the students in presenting themselves in the most positive light possible
- Send up to date and accurate transcript reports
- Keep students advised of scholarship opportunities
- Keep parents informed of guidance updates through email and the school newsletter

Students will:

- Be honest and candid with the counselor
-

- Be open to suggestions and counsel
- Approach the college search process with maturity and seriousness
- Keep parents informed of the progress being made in the college search process
- Keep the counselor updated on new activities and accomplishments
- Keep an accurate and up to date college resume
- Meet with the counselor at the appointment time
- Meet and keep all important deadlines
- Return forms requested by the counselor in a timely fashion
- Review all applications and make sure forms are complete before giving them to the college. ALWAYS retain copies for your own record.
- Proofread essays

Parents will:

- Not believe rumors about the college admissions process
- Not rely on US News and World Report Rankings as the only measure of college worth
- Keep the lines of communication open with their children and counselor
- Be encouraging, supportive, realistic, and open to giving and receiving advice and guidance
- Listen to what your child is saying about their college process
- Avoid pushing personal preferences or opinions about college choice
- Encourage your child to think about the type of person they want to become
- Be open to new suggestions...even “new” or “unknown” colleges
- Help students complete their college applications...not do it for them.
- Check your email often for updates from the school counseling office

SCA Policy on Reporting Disciplinary Infractions to Colleges and Universities

When colleges request information about student conduct, it is the policy of Seffner Christian Academy to notify colleges of major discipline infractions. In the event that a serious discipline infraction occurs after the college application forms have been sent to admission offices, and colleges have requested information about the student conduct in the initial application, mid-year, or end-of-year reports, Seffner Christian Academy and/or the students will notify the admissions offices of the colleges to which the student has applied. Students will provide the school counselor with copies of their letters sent to colleges explaining disciplinary infractions.

This policy is consistent with the “Statements of Principles of Good Practice” of the National Association of Colleges Admissions Counseling (NACAC)

Three examples of College Questions:

1. *Have you ever been expelled or suspended from school? If your answer is “yes”, please explain. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, explain the charges and sentence received, date of conviction, and any pertinent circumstances you wish us to consider. The college reserves the right to deny admission to convicted felons and students ineligible to the last institutions attended.*
2. *Have you ever been placed on probation, suspended or expelled from high school or college? If the answer is “Yes”, please explain on a separate sheet of paper.*
3. *If your answer to any of the following is “Yes”, you must submit a full statement of relevant facts on a separate sheet attached to this form. You may be required to furnish the university with copies of all official documentation explaining the final disposition of the proceedings.*
 - a. *Are you currently or have you ever been charged with or subject to disciplinary action for scholastic or any other type of misconduct at any educational institution? _____ Yes _____ No*
 - b. *Have you ever been charged with a violation of the law which resulted in, or, if still pending, could result in probation, community service, a jail sentence, the revocation of your driver’s license (including traffic violation which resulted in a fine of \$200 or more)? If your records have been expunged pursuant to applicable law, you are not required to answer “yes”, to*

these questions. If you are unsure whether you should answer "yes", we strongly suggest that you answer, "yes" and fully disclose all incidents. By doing so, you can avoid any risk of disciplinary action or revocation of an offer of admission.

_____ Yes _____ No

Policy for College Applications

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all college application and scholarship deadlines.

Application help

If a student wishes for the school counselor to review or assist in completing a college application, the student must make an appointment with the school counselor at least two (2) weeks prior to the application deadline.

Recommendation forms

If a student wishes the school counselor to complete a recommendation form/letter, the student must turn in the recommendation form to the school counselor at least two (2) weeks prior to the college deadline. A complete address must be included with the form for where the recommendation is to be sent. The recommendation will be sent directly to the college admission office or scholarship agency and not released to a third party.

Transcripts

The student **must** request that their high school transcripts be sent to the college admissions office or scholarship agency. High school transcripts will not be released without the permission of the student and/or parent. Transcript requests can be made to the School Counselor at least two (2) weeks prior to the due date.

Community Service Policies

100 hours of community service is required for students to receive the Florida Academic Scholars Award of the Florida Bright Futures Program. 75 hours of community service is required for students to receive the Florida Medallion Award of the Florida Bright Futures Program. Community Service hours are also beneficial for college applications and potential scholarship eligibility. Students are encouraged to actively participate in community service that directly addresses a social need within their community. Examples of social needs are as follows: homelessness, education, pollution, elder care, literacy, hunger, terminal illness, etc. All services should be completed through a registered non-profit organization that can verify the student's hours. The student's parent is **NOT** allowed to sign off on any community service hours earned; it must be another adult.

Community service logs are available on www.SCAcrusaders.com. Forms must be turned into the school counselor in order for credit to be awarded. Students are encouraged to turn in community service logs at the end of each semester during high school.

Seniors must have all of their community service hours completed and turned into the guidance office by the 3rd quarter of the senior year to ensure an accurate report to the Florida Department of Education for the Bright Futures Scholarship.

Community Service Log on the next page.

Community Service Log

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Graduation Date: _____ School: _____

Record of Hours

This section is being filled in each time service is completed and verified by the Agency/Supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to maintain the verification of community service hours' form and submit a copy to be added to the student's academic portfolio at the end of each semester.

Date	Time In	Time Out	Hours Served	Agency	Activity	Agency Signature

It is the student's responsibility to complete community service by the end of the first semester of his/her senior year. Additional Requirements for c/o 2011 are on 2nd page of form.

Requirements:

- Students must perform service on their own time.
- Participation in performances, festivals, or competitions count if all the following criteria are met:
 - Your service is to the benefit of a social need.
 - Your participation is voluntary and not required.
 - No one receives payment for the performance.
 - Your rehearsal hours are not counted toward total service hours
- Fundraising for non-profit organizations or charities does not count as SERVICE hours.
- Church-related community service may count as long as you are addressing a community need.
 - ushering, multimedia, nursery work, custodial work, etc. are not eligible.
 - a church soup kitchen, clothing drive, roadside clean-up, etc. are eligible.

Suggested locations for community service:

Churches, schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, crisis pregnancy centers, abuse shelters, homes for the elderly, daycare centers, fire stations, libraries, city parks, and non-profits (no fundraising activities).

Unacceptable Community Service:

Family-related activities, non-compulsory service (court-mandated community service), workshops or conferences, campaigning, paid services, law-breaking activities, service for punishment, or pre-requisites for employment.

Community Service Log Continued

ATTENTION:

According to Florida Statue 1009.534, For a student to receive the Florida Medallion Scholars award in the Bright Futures program, a student must complete a program of community service work, which shall include a minimum of 75 hours of service work and require the student to identify a **social problem** that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the problem, and, through papers, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience.

For each service performed (not each time you logged hours for the same activity), the student must complete the following activities by writing neatly, grammatically correct, and coherently. If this is not completed in its entirety, service hours may not be awarded.

What is the social problem you are addressing in this activity and why does it interest you?

What was your plan to help address this social issue?

What did learn from this experience and what do you think that you could have done better?

Multiple copies of this page may be needed if you participated in more than one service activity.

Chapter

2

SCA Counseling Department Resources

Online Resources

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he school counseling office has numerous resources available to help in your college search. The internet is a vast resource to begin the process. Schedule an appointment with your school counselor to learn what is available and direct you towards the colleges and programs that meet your needs.

Below is a list of most commonly used web-based resources:

Major & Career Exploration

- **Big Future** – <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- **My Majors**-www.mymajors.com
- **Florida Higher Education**- www.facts.org
- **Careers**- www.careers.org
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook**- <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

College Exploration

- **Big Future** – <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
 - **Christian Colleges**- www.christiancolleges.com
 - **Colleges that Change Lives**- www.ctcl.com
 - **Ecampus Tours**- www.ecampustours.com
 - **Peterson's Guides**- www.petersons.com
 - **National Center for Educational Statistics**- <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>
 - **Common Application**- www.commonapp.org
 - **Coalition**: <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org>
 - **College Parents of American**- www.collegeparents.org
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College Athletics

- **NCAA Eligibility Center-** <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-i-sports>
- **NAIA Eligibility Center-** <http://www.playnaia.org>

Financial Aid & Scholarship

- **Big Future** <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- **Scholarships** <https://www.scholarships.com>
- **Fast Web** www.fastweb.com
- **Fin Aid** <http://finaid.org/scholarships/>
- **Experts** www.scholarshipexperts.com
- **Tuition Finder** www.findtuition.com
- **Zinch** www.zinch.com
- **Federal Aid-** <http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/>
- **FAFSA Forecaster-** <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/>
- **Student Loans-** www.salliemae.com
- **Student Loans-** www.usagroup.com

Bright Futures Scholarship & Florida Aid www.Floridastudentfinancialaid.org (FSFA)

- Complete this application AFTER October 1st and BEFORE MARCH 1st of SENIOR YEAR
- Select **State Grant, Scholarships, & Applications**
- Select **Student Application**

Federal Aid, Grants, & Loans Application www.fafsa.ed.gov (FAFSA)

To apply for student financial aid from the federal government, including the Pell Grant, Perkins Loan, Stafford Loan and work-study, you will need to submit the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). There is no charge for submitting this form. The FAFSA is also required by all state and many school student assistance programs. Many colleges and universities, especially public institutions, also require the FAFSA. **You must submit the FAFSA every year, regardless of need, to maintain your Bright Futures status.**

FAFSA on the Web offers several benefits, including:

- You will get your Student Aid Report (SAR) sooner than with the paper form.
- Your FAFSA will be more accurate than a paper application, since the FAFSA on the Web has built-in edit checks to catch simple errors and you avoid errors introduced by the OCR process.
- The online FAFSA allows you to list up to ten colleges, while the paper FAFSA has space only for four colleges.
- If you have technical questions about using FAFSA on the Web, call 1-800-4-FED-AID.

COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION AFTER October 1 of SENIOR YEAR. Follow the step by step instructions on the website. The FAFSA will ask for many questions related to the student and guardian/parent income taxes. Please do your taxes as soon as possible. If it is not possible to have your taxes done before the financial aid deadlines, you can use the previous year's tax return information (as long as there has not been a major change in your financial situation in the past year)

IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR THE FAFSA:

You will need a PIN number. Please visit www.pin.ed.gov.

Your PIN can be used each year to electronically apply for federal student aid and to access your U.S. Department of Education records online. If you receive a PIN, you agree to not disclose or share your PIN with anyone. Your PIN serves as your electronic signature and provides access to your personal records. You should never give your PIN to anyone, including commercial services that offer to help you complete your FAFSA. Be sure to keep your PIN in a safe place.

SCA Annual Counseling Activities

Fall

- Freshman Parent Meeting- August
- Senior Parent Meeting- August
- Individual Senior Meetings with Counselor- August & September
- Sophomore Parent Webcast- September
- Senior Financial Aid Meeting- October
- PSAT Testing (9-11 grades)- October
- Christian College Trip- October (tentative)

Winter

- Individual Junior Meetings with Counselor- October & November
- Welcome to Middle School Night- January
- Elementary Open House- February
- Optional Individual Sophomore Meetings- January
- Optional Individual Freshman Meetings- February

Spring

- Junior College Planning Meeting- April
- Welcome to High School Night- March
- 8th grade planning Meeting- March
- K5-8th grade Terra Nova Testing- April
- AP Testing- May

College Planning Time Lines

The journey to college is one that begins in 9th grade. The courses students take starting the first year of high school determine the road they follow to college admission. Most students do not know where they want the road to end, so they should prepare for any contingency. This means taking the right classes, getting the best grades they can, and getting involved in school and community activities.

Freshman Year Time Line

Fall

- Attend Orientation in August
- Attend Freshman & Parent Information Night
- Take the most competitive classes possible based on recommendations from teachers, parents, and school counselor
- Begin your college resume/high school activities
 - Keep a copy in your computer and a hard copy in the counseling office
- Develop good study habits
- Take PSAT test in October
- Get involved with at least one extracurricular activity (sports, clubs, leadership, etc)
- Get involved in the community by volunteering efforts and talents

Winter

- Turn in community service hours to the counselor each semester
 - Continue to work hard to establish a solid high school GPA
 - Meet with your counselor for Freshman Guidance Meeting
-

Spring

- Start career & college exploration
- Select courses for Sophomore year

Summer

- Read, Read, Read (improve college test scores and prepare for college)
- Get involved in community service and ministry
- Possibly attend a summer program for academics, sports, arts
- Continue creating your College resume/high school activities

Sophomore Year Time Line

Fall

- Attend Orientation in August
- Continue to challenge yourself with courses that match your abilities
- Take challenging courses to build your academic portfolio for college
- Get involved with at least one extracurricular activity (sports, clubs, leadership, etc)
- Watch Sophomore Guidance Webcast- will be emailed from the school counselor when available.
- Continue maintaining good study habits
- Take advantage of leadership opportunities
- Take PSAT (Preliminary SAT) in October

Winter

- Continue involvement in community by volunteering efforts and talents
- Turn in community service hours to the counselor each semester
- Continue to work hard to build a solid high school GPA

Spring

- Explore future careers through job shadowing, reading, and interviews
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- Select classes for Junior Year
- Continue to update and add to College Resume/High School Activities

Summer

- Read, Read, Read (helps test scores)
- Get involved in community service and ministry
- Possibly attend a summer program for academics, sports, arts
- Consider Taking ACT or SAT to get a baseline score for areas of improvement
 - Register online
 - www.actstudent.org
 - www.collegeboard.org

Junior Year Time Line

Fall

- Attend Orientation
 - Meet with your school counselor for planning in October or November.
 - Plan a family discussion about college
 - Update your College Resume/High School Activities
 - Take the PSAT (preliminary SAT) in October
 - Start your college search
 - Begin in prayer, ask God to guide you.
 - Make a list of your abilities, preferences, & personal qualities
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- o Make a list of what you want in a college (majors, sports, size, location, etc.)
- Learn about colleges- attend a college fair (if available in your area)
 - o Talk to friends, family, counselor, & teachers
 - o Visit college websites
 - o Call or request information online from colleges
- Start thinking about paying for college
 - o FAFSA on the web- “FAFSA 4caster Tool”- <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/>
 - o ** Do not use scholarship search engines that charge a fee
- Start a file of financial aid information for your reference
- Take ACT and/or SAT
 - o www.actstudent.org
 - o www.collegeboard.org
- Start a college information file of colleges that you want to consider

Winter

- Plan to take the ACT/SAT again in the Spring & Summer
- Keep gathering information on colleges you would like to visit
- Students interested in attending military academies should begin this process in the spring and contact their senators and congressmen.
- Turn in your community service hours to the counseling office
- Explore career options:
 - o Job shadowing
 - o Community service

Spring

- Attend Junior College Planning Night for students and parents (posted on school calendar)
- You may wish to re-take the ACT & SAT again if you want to raise your scores
- Start visiting local colleges
- Develop a list of 10-15 colleges that interest you.
- Attend a College Fair (if available in your area)
- If you're considering the military, talk to a recruiter
- Look ahead to your senior year.
 - o Plan to take academic classes that will benefit you in college
 - o Consider AP courses
- Plan Summer Activities early
 - o Enrich yourself by volunteering, getting a job in a career field that you want to pursue, and travel

Summer

- Visit colleges that require traveling
 - o Take campus tours and talk with admission representatives
 - By the end of summer, you should start narrowing down your list of colleges (Top 5)
 - Take the ACT or SAT to get the best score possible. Don't wait until your senior year. You may get too busy and never take it again.
 - Prepare College/Scholarship Essays
 - Update College Resume
 - Investigate scholarship opportunities
 - Finalize ACT and SAT scores for Fall applications
-

Senior Year Timeline

Fall

- Attend Orientation
- Attend Senior & Parent Guidance Night and Financial Aid Overview night
- Edit & Update a college resume
- Meet with the school counselor for a senior meeting and go over your HS transcript to verify all your courses are accurately recorded.
- Have ready your list of colleges to TOP 5 colleges
- Review your list with your counselor and family
- Pray through your list. Ask teachers and friends to pray with you as you're making the final college decision
- Make your own, personal MASTER calendar of application deadlines, test dates, financial aid deadlines, etc.
- Write a generic college and scholarship essay that can be modified and tweaked based upon the essay instructions.
- If you're hoping to be recruited by a Division I or Division II school for sports, you must register through the NCAA eligibility center or NAIA eligibility center.
- Submit FSFA after December 1 (Bright Futures) AND Submit FAFSA after October 1
- Make sure you have completed the ACT and SAT with the scores you want.
- Start the college application process.- November 1 Goal Deadline
 - This is also a great time to ask teachers, coaches, pastors, etc. to write recommendation letters or complete the forms. This will give everyone ample time to get them in without missing the deadlines.
- Start seeking out financial aid and scholarships.

Winter

- Get your applications in ON TIME!
- Keep praying about where God wants you to be!
- Contact the admissions counselors at the colleges and double check to make sure all of your information, recommendations, and transcripts arrived.
- Check with your TOP picks' financial aid offices. Request an "institutional financial aid packet"
 - Identify scholarships to apply for and discuss with your counselor & parents what scholarship opportunities are best for you.
 - Institutional Financial Aid deadlines are normally in January-March, so fill out those scholarship applications in a hurry!
 - Remember to add those deadlines to your Master Calendar
- Make sure your community services hours are complete and turned into the school counseling office.

Spring

- WAIT FOR THOSE ACCEPTANCE LETTERS!
 - Let your counselor know when and where you get accepted!
- Financial Aid award letters from colleges start arriving by mid-April.
 - Let your counselor know when and where you get a scholarship!
- If you're unhappy about what the award letters offer you, CALL the financial aid office at the college.
- Make your final decision about which college you will attend ON or BEFORE May 1.
- ENJOY Senior Festivities and Graduation

Summer

- Ask SCA to send your final transcripts to your college when your grades and graduation information are posted.
 - Enjoy your summer!
 - Start preparing for college
 - Attend college orientation
 - Start packing if you're staying the dorms
 - Set up a budget for spending while at college
 - Research part-time jobs at your college if you need extra money
-

EXAMPLE RESUMES

1107 Ventana Drive
Seffner, FL 33584

Phone (813) 555-8265
Email kshane1@yahoo.com

Kris D. Shane

Profile

- Height 5' 8"
- Weight 165 lbs.
- Date of birth January 15, 1988

Athletic Accomplish- ments

2015–2016

High School Junior

- 1st team All-County
- Team most valuable player
- Regional qualifier, Region #4 – 2A
- North Florida PA District winner for the Optimist International qualifier
- Greater Sarasota Junior Golf Divisional Player of the Year
- Florida State Golf Association Junior Team Championship representing the Greater Sarasota Junior Golf Association
- 34th overall (out of 192) Optimist International Junior golfers worldwide
- Ranked on the Junior Golf Scoreboard

2014–2015

High School Sophomore

- 1st team All-County
- Team most valuable player
- Ohio Junior Golf Association Divisional Player of the Year

2013–2014

High School Freshman

- 2nd team All-County
- Winner Boys Hillsborough County Top 50 Tournament
- Team most valuable layer

Education

2013–Present

East Bay High School

Gibson-ton, FL

- Graduation May 2017
-

- Class rank 29th (of 475)
- GPA 4.66
- ACT/SAT 1080
- Member National Honor Society
- Scholar athlete awarded Freshman, Sophomore and Junior
- All – Academic Award awarded Junior

**Extra- Curricular
Activities**

- Spanish Club- 9,10, 11, 12
- Show Chorus- 10,11
- Walk to D'Feet ALS- Team Leader (2016)

**Volunteer
Service**

- Community Baptist Church- Soup Kitchen- Volunteer (2015-17)
- Hospice of Southwest Florida- Volunteer- Reading books and serving meals to terminally ill patients (2017)

Interests

- Public Speaking
 - Golf
 - Traveling
 - Reading Non-fiction
-

Lindsey Rayburn

14589 Red Bird Lane, Riverview, FL 33584 Ph: 813-555-9687 Email: Lindsey.Rayburn@yahoo.com

Profile

Lindsey is a self-driven and academically-minded senior who enjoys helping others. Lindsey plans to attend a college where she can use and develop her skills and talents while majoring in social work.

Academic Accomplishments

Freshman Year

- Member of Freshman Elite Honor Society
- Academic Awards: *overall highest average* Physical Science, Government, English
- 2nd Place Florida High School Regional Science Fair

Sophomore Year

- Member of National Honor Society
- Academic Awards: *overall highest average* English, Geometry, French II, World History
- Regional winner in the VFW Voice of Democracy Essay Competition

Junior Year

- Member of National Honor Society
- Academic Awards: *overall highest average* English, French III, American History
- Member of Ruskin Christian School Academic Challenge Team represented at the Florida Association of Colleges and Schools- Team place 2nd in the State.
- Winner of the Tampa Human Rights Council- *Opening Doors and Building Bridges Essay Contest*.

Senior Year

- Member of National Honor Society
 - Class Salutatorian
 - Personal Poetry published in the *Southeastern Arts Commission's* Annual Publication of High School Poets
 - Academic Awards: *overall highest average* English, Psychology, Bible Doctrines
 - Team leader of Ruskin Christian School Academic Challenge Team- represented at the Florida Association of Colleges and Schools- Team placed 1st in the State and 5th in the nation
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Education	Ruskin Christian School 2003 - Present <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Graduation: May 19, 2017▪ GPA: 4.11▪ Rank: 2 of 25▪ SAT: 1210▪ ACT: 29▪ Athletic Scholars Award- Junior and Senior Year	<i>Ruskin, FL</i>
Extra- & Co-Curricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varsity Cheerleading Squad (9,10,11,12)- Captain (11,12)• RCS Choir (10,11,12)• Drama Club (9,10)• Junior member of the Ruskin Chamber of Commerce (11,12)• Student Council Member (10,11,12)- Vice President (11)• Part-Time Nanny for a family of 4 children	
Volunteer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tutor for children with special needs, <i>Tampa Bay Cares</i> (11,12)• Volunteer, <i>Northside Baptist Church Community Pantry</i> (9,10)• Assistant Youth Coach (Cheerleading), <i>Summerfield Recreation Center</i> (10,11,12)	
Other Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who's Who Among America's High School Students (12)• <i>Northside Baptist Volunteer of the Year</i> (10)• <i>Senior-Superlative: Best All Around & Most Likely to Make a Difference</i>	
Interests	Early Childhood Development Writing Poetry Performing in Fine Arts Activities Cooking Mentoring elementary students	

Chapter

3

The College Planning Process

A Word of Advice

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ost juniors and seniors in high school feel that the college selection and application process is complicated and stressful. A common statement from these students is “there is so much to do, and I don’t know where to start.”

During your freshman and sophomore years, you will establish a record that will be sent, along with your junior records, to all of the colleges to which you apply. The first two years of high school is the time to establish your identity as a student and young adult. What you build of yourself at this time will greatly affect where you will spend your college years.

In your Junior year you should focus on choosing a possible major and a college.

- Think about your own interests, goals, and strengths.
- Ask yourself what classes you enjoy and do well in.
- Think about the size of the school you would like.
- Think about the type of activities you would like to be involved in college.
- Think about the things you would like to experience while college (internships, study abroad, hands on learning, etc)
- Are you planning to attend graduate school?
- Find out the number of students attending graduate school from each college.
- Think about the location of the school (do you want to be close to home, far from home, close enough to get home once a month, etc.)

Education is gained from the classes you take and from the quality of the professors, BUT it is also gained from all other aspects of your college experience. You want to find a college that fits you. If you consider your faith to be large part of who you are, you want to choose a college that takes your faith seriously and allows you to grow and develop your spirituality. There is nothing worse than leaving college having lost your spiritual focus.

The schools you ultimately choose should meet your needs. Study college view books, college reference books, search the internet, meet with college representatives, and attend college fairs. Visit as many colleges as you can that seem to fit your

needs. Do not choose a college solely based on prestige and reputation. Choose the college that is for you! Allow God to guide the search.

Once you have a list of colleges that meet your needs, you must determine your chances of admission. Check the high school requirements. Find out GPAs and standardized test scores of students recently admitted. This is all information the college admissions counselor will be able to answer. Ask the admissions representative what your chances are of acceptance. Compare your record and decide how realistic it is for you to apply.

College Visits and Tours

- Juniors and Seniors are permitted to visit colleges as “School Business”

Students must complete a pre arranged absence form from the school office and return to the high school principal 1 week prior to the absence.

The following pages contain a checklist of questions to ask at college fairs.

Smart Questions to ask at College Fairs

When you attend college fairs, don't be shy! Walk up to the admissions rep, introduce yourself, and let him or her give you the one-minute overview of the school. If you like what you hear, you can stay and ask more questions.



When are your summer open houses?

What kind of help will I get in learning to balance residence life and academics?

Will there be current students there that I can speak with?

Is your school especially well-known for any of its academic programs or departments?

Will there be professors on hand to talk to me?

What are the most popular majors at your school?

Are internships popular with your students?

What is the residential life like at your school?

How do you place students into internships?

What extracurricular activities are available and how can I find out about them?

What kind of academic advising does your college provide for first-year students?

What sports and athletics are available?

What services are provided for new freshmen to help them become oriented and adjusted to school life?

What makes your college different from any other college at this college fair?

Things to consider when on a College tour



1. General appearance of the campus (poor maintenance/vandalism/campus pride)
2. Student Attire (do they look like you? Is it a “jeans” and “t-shirt” campus or a “khaki and polo” campus)
3. Friendliness (eye contact/offer to help)
4. Student conversations (topic/tone/classes/papers/books)
5. Transportation
6. Faculty presence (office hours posted/open doors/student interaction)
7. Library, laboratory, and computer labs (hours? Easy access? How crowded?)
8. Fine arts facilities (studios/practice rooms/performance centers)
9. Dorms (wired/secure/coed or single sex/substance free)
10. Campus Security (What is the crime rate? The college should be willing to give you this information)

Other things you may want to know

1. What percentages of graduates who apply to law school are admitted? Med School? MBA Programs?
2. What percent of first year or core curriculum classes are taught by graduate students (often called TA's for Teaching Assistants)?
3. If you have a student tour guide, ask them what made them choose this college?
4. Find out from professors about internships in your major field of study. What three companies recruit the majority of graduates in your field from the college?

Visit with a Purpose

College Visit Checklist

When visiting a college, go with a check list...a purpose...know what you want to find and see if it's there. This is a generic college visit template. You may use this one or create one specific to you and what you visit for the best comparison of schools.

College: _____

Admissions Contact: _____

Ratings 1 =Poor 5=Excellent

Academics

Strength of academic program	1	2	3	4	5
Size of class	1	2	3	4	5
Level of overall academic challenge	1	2	3	4	5

Quality of faculty	1	2	3	4	5
Support Services (tutoring, counseling, career placement)	1	2	3	4	5

Total Points_____

Campus Life

Residence Halls	1	2	3	4	5
Food	1	2	3	4	5
Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Transportation	1	2	3	4	5

Total Points_____

Campus Activities

Social Organizations	1	2	3	4	5
Sports	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities for music & drama	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities for Ministry	1	2	3	4	5
Off-campus attractions	1	2	3	4	5

Total Points_____

Campus Appeal

First impression	1	2	3	4	5
Classrooms	1	2	3	4	5
Residence Halls	1	2	3	4	5
Dining Halls	1	2	3	4	5
Student Center	1	2	3	4	5
Appearance of students	1	2	3	4	5
Library	1	2	3	4	5
Technology	1	2	3	4	5

Total Points_____

Do you see yourself on this campus? _____ Yes _____ No

Do you see people you'd like to have as friends? _____ Yes _____ No

Did you meet professors you'd like to study with? _____ Yes _____ No

* Leave a copy of your College Resume with admissions office.

* Remember to write a thank you note to the admissions representative within a week following your visit. It will leave a good impression on the college.

College Essay Writing Tips

What are admissions officials thinking after reading a strong essay? They say they're often intrigued with the applicant and would like to meet him or her. A college essay accomplishes its goal when admissions officials feel that the candidate is:

- A strong, reflective writer.
- Knows why he or she wants to go to college.
- Is interested in attending the school.
- Cares about the admissions process.

Conversely, when admissions officials read a weak essay, they think the candidate is not prepared or not really interested in their college. Most common essay blunders:

- Not responding specifically to the prompt.
- Using words inappropriately. Big words don't make a better essay.
- Using clichés – expressions such as “I can do anything if I set my mind to it,” and “Now I understand the true value of teamwork,” etc.
- Repeating information. Sometimes students share the material they've used elsewhere in the application with no further development. Use it with new information that responds to why they're involved in an activity and how it has affected them.
- Gimmicks. Students have taken creativity too far by writing rhyming poems about why they deserve to be accepted, going overboard about their love of the school mascot . Creativity with moderation works best.
- Bad topic choice. Don't write about strident political or religious views or solutions to world problems such as hunger, peace or global warming.
- Writing about a college's prestige or the ability of its graduates to earn a big salary as reasons to want to go there.
- Boring introduction. Avoid starting out with a lackluster line such as, “In this essay I will talk about why Gandhi was an important historical figure.” The read time for essays is one to two minutes.
- One of the most avoidable blunders of all...writing the wrong school name in the essay as you extol its virtues and your undying desire to attend. It really does happen.

Remember to:

- Maintain a personal tone
 - Show how personal experiences have influenced you
 - Reveal your character, cooperation, perseverance, and self-discipline
 - Examine your personal aspirations, interests, values, and experiences
 - Be open and honest
- Practice writing, reading aloud, and receiving constructive criticism.
- Have your essay proofread! Give a copy to your parents, your English teacher, and the school counselor for proofreading BEFORE submitting!

For more essay writing help visit www.essayedge.com

College Preparation Academics

In order for admissions into competitive universities, students should take the most rigorous course selection available to them. The graduation requirements at SCA meet college prep requirements. Below is a list of recommended courses for college preparation:

4 English

4 Math (Algebra 1 and above)

4 Science (2 with lab components)

4.5 Social Science

2+ Foreign Language (of the same language)

Honors and AP Courses increase the rigor of these academics and increase the integrity of the high school transcript.

Please see the academic handbook for official SCA graduation requirements.

Factors Influencing College Admissions

A survey of trends in admissions by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors list the following in order of importance as factors considered in college admissions decisions:

1. Academic course selection in grades 9,10,11

- “The best predictor of success is past behavior.”
- Courses that are writing intensive
- Highly selective colleges suggest AP
- Most all colleges suggest 2 yrs+ of a foreign language.
- Take the most rigorous course schedule available to you at your school.

2. Relative overall performance (class rank)

3. Senior courses in progress

- Continue to stretch yourself
- Take additional math, science, and social science

4. Test Scores

- Usually count for 15%-25% of the admissions decision.

5. Volume of applications received (Number of apps. vs. Number of open spots).

- The volume of applications is not necessarily reflective of the quality of the school.
- Meet and beat the deadlines. **The early bird gets the worm!**

6. Extracurricular Activities

- Depth of involvement is more important than number of activities
- Leadership roles are important
- QUALITY volunteer/service activities are attractive to colleges.

7. Essays

- Follow directions!
- Story-telling is an excellent tool to use.
- If the essay is optional, WRITE IT.
- Ask for editing help.

8. Recommendations

- Ask for recommendations at least 2 WEEKS in advance.
- Respect your recommenders time.
- Choose recommenders who know you well.
- Have at least 2 academic and 1 character references.
- Ask once and make copies for other applications and scholarships.
- Ask your recommender to comment on specific character qualities and personal experiences with you.

How Many Applications to Send Out? The Rule of 6

The question is often asked, “To how many colleges should I apply?” This varies from student to student and depends on the strength of the high school transcript, the type of colleges to which you are applying and a number of other factors. In general, however, it is recommended that you apply to six colleges and/or universities

The six schools you choose to apply should fall into one of the following three categories”

- 2 “Reach” Schools: Your “reach” schools or your “Dream University” are the schools that meet your needs but are competitive based on your academic credentials. It may be a long shot but the admissions process is not always predictable. You do not want to wonder for years whether you would have been admitted to the University of your Dreams.
- 2 Realistic Schools: Your Realistic Schools are schools that meet your needs and ones for which your qualifications seem to match those of most students accepted in the last few years.
- 2 Safe Schools: Safe schools are the “certain” schools for which you are clearly qualified. Your numbers are most definitely those of students which have been accepted in the past years.

Keep in mind that the most important factors in admissions are your grades in the classes you have taken for the last 3 years, the strength of these classes and of those you are taking as a senior, in addition to the scores you have earned on the SAT and ACT. The other factors that are considered are extracurricular activities, athletic leadership, essays and recommendations. These factors may help sway decisions in your favor, but will not strengthen a weak academic record. This is also true of connections or of family members who are alumni of the school of your choice. Remember that college admissions standards change over a period of years.

College Credits in High School

Students who would like the opportunity to earn college credit may participate in 2 programs offered at SCA:

Dual Enrollment- Dual Enrollment is available off-site through Hillsborough Community College and on-site through Southeastern University. Dual Enrollment is a privilege and not a right at Seffner Christian Academy.

Advanced Placement Courses- The AP program is available at SCA in limited courses. Students who meet the specific criteria for each course (listed in Academic Handbook) may take AP courses in their schedule at SCA. These are college level courses with college level expectations. At the end of the school year, students will take the Advanced Placement examination for that specific subject. Based on the score of that exam (1-5), colleges/universities may award college credit or advanced standing in college classes. Typically, students must score a 3 or above on the AP exam in order to receive college credit. Please contact the colleges to which you are applying to find out acceptable AP scores.

For more information regarding AP and Dual Enrollment please see the Academic Handbook.



Chapter

4

Testing & Financial Aid

Tests You Should Know About

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SAT/NMSQT- The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test measures verbal reasoning, critical reading, math problem solving, and writing skills. It is taken at SCA in fall of 9th, 10th, and 11th grade..

SAT Reasoning- SAT consists of multiple choice questions and one essay question that measures critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing abilities. The SAT-Reasoning is recommended or required by many colleges as a part of the admission process. The SAT should be taken by juniors and seniors beginning in the Fall of Junior year or end of sophomore year.

ACT- The ACT assessment measures educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and natural sciences. The ACT has an optional writing section. The ACT is recommended or required by many colleges as a part of the admission process. The ACT should be taken by juniors and seniors beginning in the Fall of Junior year or end of sophomore year.

ASVAB- The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple choice test that measures aptitude for a variety of careers both in the military and civilian environment. This test is not given at SCA. You contact your respective military recruiter to take this test.

Advanced Placement Examinations- The AP Program consists of college level examinations in specific AP subjects. Students may choose to take AP exams, which are given in May. Most colleges and universities give credit and/or advanced standing, or exemption from certain courses to students who AP exams are considered acceptable. It is highly recommended that the student take the subject specific AP course before taking the AP examination. See the school counselor for more details.

College Entrance Exams & Preparation

Suggestions for when to take the ACT and SAT

Summer after Sophomore Year

Take ACT and/or SAT (if you feel ready)

Junior Year

October-December: Take SAT

January: Take ACT

February-April: Take SAT and ACT again

Summer after Junior Year:

Take ACT and SAT Again

if you want to raise your scores

(The only test dates are in May and June so plan ahead)

Fall of Senior Year:

If you still want to raise your scores, take the SAT or ACT again.

Try to have all of your testing done before the spring of your senior year. This guarantees you have your highest test score by the college application deadlines. Also, seniors get "senioritis" in the spring and don't feel like taking any more tests. ☹

SAT Registration

www.collegeboard.org/sat

ACT Registration

www.actstudent.org

Preparation Help:

- SCA Critical Thinking Skills & Test Prep Course- Offered to all students
- www.collegeboard.org
- www.actstudent.org
- Kahn Academy with Collegeboard
- Visit Test Prep section of Barnes & Noble for books or computer study guides: Barron's, Princeton Review, Kaplan, and Collegeboard.

Specific Test Registration Information

It is the student's responsibility to know which test is required by colleges and to register for the appropriate deadlines. Registration materials are available in the school counseling office or at the listed websites. Each test is offered several times throughout the year at a number of locations. SCA is a testing center for the SAT. When you register for these tests, you should request to have your scores sent to colleges that you are considering. For an additional fee, you may have your scores sent after the test date. Most colleges require these scores to be sent by the testing agency and will not accept those on your transcript as official.

Financial Aid Information

National scholarships/Grants- These are a tough fierce competition.. The best way to become aware of them is to do your own search via the local libraries and through the internet. Students may qualify for scholarships by becoming a National Merit Finalist. In order to be considered in the National Merit competition. Students must take the October administration of the PSAT in their Junior year. This is the only year they will qualify for the competition. Students will be notified the Fall of their senior year if they meet the requirements to advance in this competition.

Local Scholarships/Grants- these scholarships are often awarded through organizations such as the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc. When these organizations send SCA the information, informational emails will be sent to

qualifying students parents. You may wish to contact local agencies on your own to get a jump start. When you call, inquire whether or not they offer any scholarships to local students. Call banks, hospitals, local businesses, and community organizations. Some parental employers may have scholarship programs or tuition assistance programs available to dependents of employees.

College/University Scholarships/Grants- The scholarships are offered directly to students whom apply and are accepted for admission. Many colleges set aside money to provide in-house scholarships for their students. The best way to obtain these scholarships is to follow the financial aid process of each school. You can find out this information by calling the admissions representatives of your respective schools. Another way occurs when the admissions office evaluates applications and offers certain applicants money because they meet specific criteria. Students who qualify in this way will be notified shortly after their letter of acceptance. The third way is through interviewing or auditioning for a scholarship.

Most financial aid is awarded on the basis of need and most financial aid programs rely on one of the need analysis systems. The most common is the:

- FAFSA: students who wish to be considered for all types of federal, state, and institutional financial aid must complete and submit the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. Please see the guidance resource section in the previous pages for more information on completing the FAFSA. This form cannot be completed until October 1 of SENIOR YEAR, but should be submitted as early as possible. Parental and student tax information will be required for these forms.

Be sure to contact the financial aid office of each college to which you are applying and request information on their policy of awarding and applying for financial aid.

Bright Futures Scholarship Program- Many SCA students qualify for the State of Florida financial aid. In the Spring of 1997 the Florida legislature established requirements and regulation for qualifying for two academic scholarships that have been grouped together under the title “Bright Futures Scholarship Program.”

Florida Academic Scholars
Florida Medallion Scholars

For more information on the Bright Futures program go to: www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org and click on Bright Futures.

Athletic Scholarships & Collegiate Athletics

If you desire to play college level sports, you must register with the NCAA or NAIA Eligibility Center. You can review the eligibility requirements and register online.

For more information visit: <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-i-sports> or <https://www.playnaia.org/eligibility-center>

Some athletes work with a recruiter. However, with or without a recruiter, realize YOU must be proactive and market yourself to college coaches. Many college coaches say that they would prefer to hear from the athlete him/herself because it shows a proactive attitude and that the student is particularly interested in that college. You will need an athletic resume (examples provided earlier). This would include timings, athletic achievements such as district and state honors, and participation in teams.

Athletic recruitment is all about marketing yourself into the position you want. You must be aggressive! Begin your market campaign after you have finished the sport your junior year. Coaches will be calling 7-10 athletes for every open position on their team... they only need sign one of you. If you have many offers, pray over them and choose the best opportunity God has presented.

Performing and Visual Arts Programs & Scholarships

Much like athletes, performing and visual artists will need to communicate with the departments at their respective campuses. You should also have a specific resume or portfolio to showcase your talent. As a performing artist you will in all likelihood need to audition and present a portfolio.

For current information on local performing arts fairs, check with your college to learn about traveling auditions dates and portfolio review in your area. National Portfolio Day brings together experienced college representatives to review work and offer critique. NPD also offers a forum for the exchange of information regarding work, college plans, and career plans. For more information visit: <http://portfolioday.net/>

Thespians please check with ALL of your colleges to determine respective audition times, places, and requirements. Request your audition slot early in the process as these times fill up. You will often be required to perform different genres. Start preparing early.

Digital Recordings and Portfolios- take the time to develop any supporting documentation you provide to colleges. It should be an example of your VERY BEST work. Creating an audition digital recording or portfolio should take weeks not something put together overnight.



Chapter

5

Military Service

Military Service Academies

T

he Service Academies are open to both men and women. Students seeking admission to these highly selective institutions must have a very high academic record, be at the top of their class, have a very good SAT and ACT scores, and be in good physical condition. Students must receive a nomination from a Representative, a Senator, or the Vice President. The process must be started in January of the JUNIOR YEAR, and the application to the Academies should be mailed early in the Senior year.

Several tasks must be accomplished simultaneously:

1. Contact the academy to complete the Pre-Candidate Information form.
2. Request a nomination to a military academy from your US Congressman or Senators. Contact the US Senators from your state at www.senate.gov or contact the congressman for your district at www.house.gov
3. Many Congressmen have their academy applications available online. Once you complete your application, return it to the local office indicated on the forms, and try to become familiar with the local office personnel responsible for academy applications and decisions for your congressman and senators.

An appointment to a US Military Academy (West Point, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, or Merchant Marines) is considered to be a \$285,000 scholarship! It takes a strong desire to serve your country. The application process is tedious and life as a cadet is rigorous, but the educational opportunity is without limits for the right applicant! Make contact with the academies no later than your junior year (as stated above). The academy will then assign you a Liaison Officer for your school. This person will be a great resource for you as you go through the process outlined below:

Junior Year

1. Contact Academy and be assigned a Liaison Officer
 2. Make sure your school counselor knows you are interested in the academy
 3. Make sure you take and perform well on the PSAT
 4. Ask your Liaison Officer to help you apply for the special program at the academy. Admission to the summer program is by invitation ONLY and is based on PSAT scores.
-

5. Apply for nomination through your congressman and senators
6. Take the SAT Reasoning Test and/or ACT

Senior Year

1. Take medical and physical aptitude tests as directed by the academy
2. complete the application to the academy
3. Complete applications to the congressman or senators

Academy Contact Information

Air Force www.usafa.edu

1-800-423-8723

West Point www.usma.edu

1-800-872-2769

Navy www.usna.edu

1-800-872-6289

Coast Guard www.uscg.edu

1-877-NOW-USCG

Merchant Marines www.usmma.edu

1-866-546-4778

ROTC Program

The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is another option for students interested in serving in the military. ROTC offers a way to have your education paid for with guaranteed occupations waiting for you after your graduation. 75% of all military officers come through the ROTC program. There are four-year and three-year scholarships with obligation to serve after graduation. Applying early (summer before senior year) gives you the edge!

Qualifications for ROTC scholarships include: age 17-27; single with no dependents; top 10-15% of your class; 28 ACT or 1300 SAT (Critical Reading and Math), and excellent physical condition. ROTC students may attend any college that accepts ROTC scholarships. They may even attend one college for class and take their ROTC classes at a different nearby college. For information on ROTC scholarships, contact the following:

ROTC (Army)

1-800-USA-ROTC

www.armyrotc.com

AFROTC (Air Force)

1-800-522-0033

www.afrotc.com

NROTC (Navy)

1-800-NAV-ROTC

www.nrotc.com

Note: There is a minimum six-year commitment to attending a military academy or accepting an ROTC scholarship. It usually involves four years of active duty and two years of reserve duty. Again, this program is not for everyone but for those who have a desire to serve their country, ROTC provides incredible opportunities for scholarship and leadership.
