

The College Application Package includes many items including but not limited to:

- Transcript of courses and grades
- High school profile
- SAT reasoning results (and sometimes SAT subject tests)
- Essay
- Guidance recommendation
- Teacher recommendation (s)
- Alumni interview and recommendations (optional)

Yale University website indicates, “The majority of students who are admitted stand out from the rest because a lot of little things, when added up, tip the scale in their favor.”

Here are some tips that might help with each item in your application package.

### College Tips Spring 2007

1. Relax about it! Here is why...
  - a. Huge bubble of applicants will continue until 2013.
  - b. You can be a straight A student with a 2400 SAT and still not get into your first choice.
  - c. It is very difficult for a college admission team to find the best candidate within the applicant pool.
    - i. Depending upon how a high school grades, a student may feel comfortable giving a self reported “A” average on the SAT profile; meanwhile, they received a 1500 out of 2400 combined score (a score in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile).
    - ii. At another school, a student may report having a B+ average but get a perfect 2400 out of 2400 (top ½ of 1%).
    - iii. Both schools may have unique grading policies and will need to explain the transcript in a supplemental school profile.
  - d. The top schools have acceptance rates in the single digits but overall, the national acceptance rate is 70%
  - e. Colleges do not want to fill their classes with look-alikes. They want a diverse student body.
2. Bond with your 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> choice college as much as your 1<sup>st</sup>. THE GOOD NEWS IS RECORD NUMBERS OF KIDS ARE GOING TO COLLEGE AND THE ENTIRE ACADEMIC BAR IS RISING.
3. Due to many kids coming to college loaded with AP courses and graduating early, or going abroad to study, top colleges are filling their seats with transfers from community colleges. Consider the community colleges, and also consider four-year colleges, even if you haven’t heard of them.

Now that we have that straight...here are things you can do to put your best foot forward, wherever you apply.

### Freshman

1. When Thurgood Marshall retired from the US Supreme Court they asked him how he wanted to be remembered. He said, “that I did the best I could with what I had.” Work hard in the environment you are in. Take some challenging courses available to you.
2. As a freshman, print and read the “Common Application” and become familiar with its content. <http://www.commonapp.org/> Over 300 colleges accept it and it is important that you become familiar with its layout and questions.
3. Be aware of the consequences of your behavior throughout high school. If you are suspended for drug or alcohol offenses, the high school has a duty to report and describe the occurrence to colleges. See Guidance Recommendation section of the Common Application.
4. Maintain academic integrity. Your school teachers and counselors will not give glowing recommendations to cheaters because they do not want cheaters to be representative of the types of

students they are recommending to colleges. A high school will not tarnish their overall image to help individual cheaters.

5. Start talking to people who have been through the college application process.
6. Review college admission requirements since you may need to start now to fulfill them (such as 3-4 years of language).
7. Extracurricular activities: Don't do it because you feel you have to, do it because you want to and you enjoy it.

### **Sophomore/Junior**

8. When preparing for the PSAT and SAT, take practice tests at home. The test is about endurance and test taking skills, as much as it is about content. The PSAT is a college's first glimpse of you.
9. Keep a resume. Keep it updated and give it every time you interact with a college representative.
10. Develop your criteria for college and then start searching for the ones that match your criteria. Selectivity, size, distance, residential/commuter, athletics, etc.
11. Go to local college information nights sponsored by the colleges.
12. Go to the college website and look for the section on "prospective students." Get on the mailing list. If they send you something to fill in, send it back.
13. Visit the campus. Don't apply if you are not ready to commit, and don't commit until you have seen the place. You wouldn't buy a car without seeing it.
14. Consider a 2-week or even 6-week summer college experience.
  - a. Shows a love of learning.
  - b. Gives real experience in a city or the country.
  - c. May provide transferable college credit.
  - d. Allows you to learn to be away.
15. Review the college's application requirements. Even colleges using the Common Application have unique addendums.
16. Take the SAT subject tests, if required.
17. Complete the AP examinations.

### **Senior**

18. Parents complete the online FAFSA form for financial aid. See if a particular college requires other forms as well.
19. Identify reach, level and safety choices... (although no school is safe these days).
20. If you have a top choice, apply for early decision. If deferred, consider another college with early decision II.
21. When applying, consider the whole package including the parts you don't send. Is your high school sending a profile? What does it say? Is your other material consistent? Be sure your counselor is your advocate.
22. Do not write an essay about how much you like the college. Tell the committee about you. Essay has replaced the interview.
23. Have someone proofread everything you send. Have no one but you write it. (The SAT writing section now provides a college with your writing sample. You will raise red flags if your application essay is much better than your SAT writing sample.)
24. Do not inflate or falsify. Colleges have begun asking for verification of the facts you supply. Some are completing background checks, especially the graduate business schools.
25. All colleges have extensive alumni networks: find the leading local alumni at the colleges, which interest you. After each meeting, send a thank-you note, and follow up on any open items. If offered an interview, do it. Ask many thoughtful questions of them. Research the college and major before you complete the interview. Seek on-campus contacts like coaches and professors in areas of interest. If possible, have your coaches and teachers call or write these individuals. When you visit the campus, be sure to stop at the Admissions Office to introduce yourself, leave a resume, and find a personal contact.
26. If you get financial aid from one college but not another, ask if the second college can match the first. (Aid exists so do not be overwhelmed by sticker price.)

## **Graduates**

Your GHAMAS experience gives you not only the ability to lead, but also to serve. Give your guidance to next generation GHAMAS. Once you get to college, it is fine to switch majors.

Prepared by Cathy Bartell, First generation college

- SUNY Upstate Medical, Associate of Applied Science, Respiratory Therapy 85
- University of Missouri-Columbia, Bachelor of Health Science 86
- Cornell University, Master of Healthcare Administration 90
- Working Mom 1990- present
- Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network
- Simsbury High and GHAMAS parent 2005-2008; President GHAMAS Parents, Friends, and Alumni 2007-2008
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Attention GHAMAS Parents, Friends and Alumni

- Please go to [www.GHAMAS.com](http://www.GHAMAS.com) and click on college info. If you are willing, please enter yourself as a college or career contact.