

Steps to applying to a college/university:

- First, visit the colleges you are interested in attending, if possible.
- Attend the college visits at MSHS (www.mounstsihighschool.com; Counseling tab, College Visits).
- Visit college fairs (www.nationalcollegefairs.org, www.nccf.us).
- Check out a virtual tour online www.ecampustours.com, www.campustours.com, www.collegeview.com, and check the college website
- Try to narrow your choices to 3-5 colleges. Application fees are \$50 each or higher.
- Set up a calendar with all the deadlines for applying, financial aid and housing. Create a folder for each college; put a checklist inside to track your progress.

Steps in the application process:

- **Apply** as early as possible, watching all deadlines. Applying online is strongly encouraged! Complete the college's own application online (it's savable and can be done over time). Or, save time by seeing if your college choices are among the 460 colleges which accept the Common Application www.commonapp.org (Gonzaga, SPU, Seattle U, U of Puget Sound, Whitman accept *only* the Common App); or the Universal College Application (80) www.universalcollegeapp.com; or CollegeNet/ApplyWeb at www.collegenet.com, click on Custom Search.
If using the Common App or Universal App, check to see if a Supplement is also required. The **essay/personal statement/insight** resume is also required.
Remember to **pay the application fee!**
- Take the **SAT test** and/or **ACT test** as soon as possible in your Senior year, or even better, in the spring of your Junior year. When you register to take the test, choose 4 colleges you wish to have your scores sent to, and if you wish, enter code 480797 for MSHS so that your scores can be added to your school record. The first 4 score reports are free; each additional score report request is \$9.50. Most colleges want the test scores sent directly from the testing agency to the college. Interested in the 830 colleges which do not use the SAT or ACT test to admit most of their students? Check out www.fairtest.org.
- Order a copy of your official **transcript** for each college through our Counseling Secretary. You can request an "unofficial" copy for your own records free of charge. Each *official* transcript costs \$1.00. Pay the fee at the Finance Window; turn in the Transcript Form to the Counseling Center. MSHS can mail your transcript, recommendation letters and other college forms for you, unless you wish to return later to pick-up your items and mail them yourself. NOTE: If using the Common App, turn in the **Secondary School Report Form** to the Counseling Center; type or write your personal information in the top section, then attach the form to your transcript request.

- Send in **recommendation letters** from teachers and/or your school counselor. Fill out the Student Resume, found on the MSHS website (www.mountsihighschool.com, **Counseling tab, Student Resume on left**), by **typing the information and saving it as a Word document, printing it out**, and giving a copy to each person who is writing a rec letter for you. Allow at least a two week turnaround time for a rec letter to be written!

If you need a counselor recommendation letter, you need to schedule a 20 minute appointment with your counselor before they can write a rec letter for you. If the college requires a Counselor Rec. Form, fill out the top portion before giving it our Counseling Secretary.

NOTE: Send in letter(s) of recommendation to a public college if you have circumstances that need to be explained. Letters are not needed for the UW. However, Honors Colleges, sports scholarships, and private colleges require recommendation letters.

If a question appears on the college application asking if you wish to waive your right to see the recommendation letters, the better answer is YES, I waive my right. You should trust that anyone who agrees to take the time to write you a recommendation will write a glowing letter about you.

Decision time: After reviewing the list of colleges that have accepted you, decide which college you wish to attend next year. Send in your **housing deposit** and **tuition deposit** as early as possible to the college you choose! By **May 1**, which is the **national** reply date for all future college students all across the country, notify every college of your acceptance or rejection of their offer of admission and financial aid. Doing this helps colleges clear waitlists and gives them an accurate count of who is attending their college.

Applying for Financial Aid:

There are many sources of financial aid to pay your college expenses. The total financial aid package that will pay for your college costs could include a combination of grants (free \$), work study (job), federal and private loans, and scholarships (free \$).

The FAFSA - Free Application for Financial Aid - is the starting point for grants, work-study (job) and loans from the federal government. The FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov) should be submitted online on or as soon as possible after January 1 in your Senior year. You can have the FAFSA results sent to 10 colleges (can add and delete colleges, too).

Be aware that the financial aid process is separate from the application process, and has different deadlines!

Check each college's financial aid and scholarship deadlines, because those deadlines could be much earlier than the application deadline for:

- 1) The FAFSA
- 2) The college's financial aid form (check the college website under financial aid) or the CSS Profile form (www.collegeboard.com) if requested by the college
- 3) Scholarship applications

Sign all the papers in the financial aid package the college sends you; mail papers back to the college by their deadline.

Also search for scholarships (national, state, employer-sponsored and local).