



# College 101: For Seniors and Families

# What is Most Important to You?

- What are my reasons for going to college? What are my long terms goals?
- Where do I see myself? 2 or 4 year institution? Small or large school?
- Do I want to stay close to home or am I prepared to visit my family only a few times a year?
- Have my grades been high enough to be considered by a very selective school?
- Do I want a demanding academic environment?
- How important will cost be in my final choice?

# Where do I apply?

**“Reach” schools:** If your test scores/GPA are not within the middle 50% of last year’s admitted class, the school is considered a reach. Any school with an admission rate of under 10-15% is considered a reach even if you have a 4.0 GPA and perfect test score.

\*If you fall under the middle 50% of last years admitted class, it is beneficial to submit an essay even if it is optional.

**“Match” schools:** Meet the entrance/admission requirements, but the school is considered selective

**“Probable” schools:** Meet or exceed the entrance/admission requirements and selectivity process

# Planning Calendar

- September-November: College visits, complete applications, attend college fairs, request letters of recommendation
- December-January: FAFSA, Mid-year reports for Common Application
- February-March: Scholarships, financial aid letters
- May 1st: College Decision Deadline
- May 6th-May 17th: AP Exams



# Student Responsibilities

- ⇒ Own your process
- ⇒ Review resources
- ⇒ Complete applications
- ⇒ Follow deadlines, admission requirements, policies and guidelines
- ⇒ Request and/or submit required materials
- ⇒ Check status of application once submitted

# Role of the Counselor

- ⇒ Advise on post-secondary search
- ⇒ Review essays and applications with students
- ⇒ Complete required and/or recommended supplemental materials
- ⇒ Collaborate with advisors and faculty
- ⇒ Discuss standardized testing options
- ⇒ Oversee submission of school records

# Colleges visiting U-High

- ⇒ \*New\* College Visit Tuesday- Each week (9/19-11/7) we will host up to 4 college/university representatives. All visits will be held in the Library.
- ⇒ Complete the [College Representative Visit form](#) on the U-High website
- ⇒ You are responsible for any missed class time, materials and assignments

# Admission deadlines



## DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

#### Regular Decision

##### DEFINITION:

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

#### Rolling Admission

##### DEFINITION:

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

#### Early Action (EA)

##### DEFINITION:

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

#### Early Decision (ED)

##### DEFINITION:

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

##### COMMITMENT:

BINDING

#### Restrictive Early Action (REA)

##### DEFINITION:

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.



# Ethical Responsibilities

- The student is responsible for notifying colleges if an academic class was dropped after the transcript was submitted
- Comply with Early Decision or Restrictive Early Action policies
- All information reported (including self-reported grades and test scores) is truthful and accurate
- May 1st is the deadline to let colleges know you will be attending, and make a deposit to one institution

# What is included in a college application?

## Student

- Application- includes academics, essays and activities
- Test scores- if required (sent from College Board/ACT)
- Payment- cost varies
- Invitations to counselor/teacher

## U-High Counselor

- Transcript (we do not rank) and School Profile
- Secondary School Report
- Counselor Recommendation

## Teacher

- Teacher Recommendation (if required)

# AP/Dual Credit Transferability

- ⇒ No set standard
- ⇒ Example:
  - AP Calculus
    - ISU: 3, 4, 5 - Math 145 (4 credits)

What's trending in the world of College right now with AP/Dual credit???

\*\* Refer to Counseling website for more information

[College Board AP Credit Search](#)

# Common App

1. **Gather materials:** transcript, list of activities, work, family responsibilities, test scores (with dates), parent/guardian information, academic honors and achievements.
2. **Create an account**
3. **Add Colleges:** View “Dashboard” and “My Colleges”. Add up to 20 colleges, and you can adjust them at any time. Once you hit submit, you cannot remove any schools from your list.
4. **Engage Supporters:** All colleges need official school forms. Many will ask for letters of recommendation. Counselors, teachers, and recommenders will submit forms on your behalf. Every college chooses their own recommendation requirements. You can find details on each college’s “College Information” page.
5. **Understanding Requirements:** Each college needs you to complete common questions and add counselor. Beyond that their applications vary. Each college can determine their unique requirements for: deadlines, application fees, personal essays, courses and grades, test policy, portfolio, writing supplements, and recommendations.
6. **Plan Essays:** Can feel like the biggest part of your application. As you work on your applications, you can find essays or short answer questions in 3 sections- Common App Personal Essay, College-specific questions, writing supplements.
7. **Submit your Application:** 3-step process (Review your application, pay the fee, submit your application).

# Requesting Transcripts

All seniors should have received an email earlier this week from Parchment with steps to take to request transcripts.

# Mid-year and Final Transcripts

## Mid-year (1st semester grades)

- The Counseling Office will automatically send mid-year reports through the Common Application in late January. If you did not apply through the Common Application, and need us to send your 1st semester grades, please contact your counselor.

## Final Transcripts

- The Counseling Office will automatically send all final transcripts after students completed the post-high school plans survey in April.

# Letters of Recommendation

- ⇒ Check each school's website for specific requirements
- ⇒ Look to see what is required vs. optional
- ⇒ Do not send letters for colleges that do not ask for them
- ⇒ Complete the Brag Sheet
- ⇒ Give your recommender a minimum of 2 weeks to complete

## Ask.....

- ⇒ A teacher, coach, club sponsor, etc. from junior year (who knows you well and can speak to both your academic and personal strengths)
- ⇒ A teacher directly if they will write you a letter

# Essays and Interviews

- ⇒ Start early
- ⇒ Be yourself
- ⇒ Be honest
- ⇒ Stay focused
- ⇒ Put your best foot forward
- ⇒ Get a second opinion
- ⇒ Proofread
- ⇒ Do research prior to the interview
- ⇒ Be prompt
- ⇒ Be neat- dress appropriately
- ⇒ Be prepared- Mock interview



# Scholarships

- ⇒ College/university scholarships
- ⇒ Local, state, national scholarships on [U-High counseling website](#)
- ⇒ U-High scholarships- available in March
- ⇒ National searches

# Helpful Resources

- U-High Website: Academics/Counseling
- Google Classroom- Join **Class of 2024** Class code is **zrqt5yb**
- Net Price Calculator: Available on every institution's website
- [College Scorecard](#): Compare colleges, programs, costs, admissions, and more
- College Search: [Big Future](#)
- Financial Aid: [www.FAFSA.gov](http://www.FAFSA.gov), [CSS Profile](#),
- Scholarships: [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com), [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com), [finaid.org](http://finaid.org), [www.goingmerry.com](http://www.goingmerry.com), [College Board](#)

# Upcoming Events

[College Night and FAFSA Workshop](#)- Wednesday, January 17th in U-High Library

[Greater McLean County College Fair](#)- Tuesday, October 3rd at 5:30-7pm at Illinois Wesleyan University

[NACAC College Fairs](#) (in-person and virtual)- In Chicago on 9/30 from 11am-3pm and in St. Louis on 10/29 from 1pm-4pm  
Virtual- 9/10 from 12-5 (CT)

[Meeting with Mrs. O'Connor](#)- Please schedule a time to meet to discuss your post-graduation plans, get assistance, and ask questions



# Thank you for coming!

Mrs. Courtney O'Connor  
College and Career Counselor  
309-438-5693  
[clocon2@ilstu.edu](mailto:clocon2@ilstu.edu)

Mrs. Carrie Hoffman  
School Counselor A-K  
309-438-8154  
[choffm2@ilstu.edu](mailto:choffm2@ilstu.edu)

Mr. Chris Headrick  
School Counselor L-Z  
309-438-5520  
[cheadri@ilstu.edu](mailto:cheadri@ilstu.edu)

Mr. Travis Millard  
Registrar  
309-438-5691  
[tkmilla@ilstu.edu](mailto:tkmilla@ilstu.edu)

ISAC Representative  
Julia Lavorata  
[Julia.Lavorata@Illinois.gov](mailto:Julia.Lavorata@Illinois.gov)