

# **Senior College Info Night – August 25, 2020**

## Slide 1

The remainder of this video will be guided by a presentation of slides that will be posted on the Guidance website along with this video.

## Slide 2

Our objectives for this presentation are to help you to understand the college application process, the different types of applications you may encounter and the different application platforms colleges may use, how to request your transcripts be sent to colleges, and how college deadlines affect our deadlines for requests. We will also identify the roles of the student, the parent, and the Counselor in this process.

## Slide 3

Normally in this presentation, we share the top destinations of our students from the previous class. Given the disruptions caused by the effects of Covid-19, we are sharing data from the Class of 2019, which is more typical of the patterns we normally see. As you can see, a large number of our students choose to start at our community college, College of DuPage. You can also see large numbers of our students choose schools in the Midwest, relatively close to home. If you would like to see complete lists of destinations for the Classes of 2016-2019, you can find them under the Seniors tab on the Neuqua Guidance Website at [www.nvhsguidance.com](http://www.nvhsguidance.com).

## Slide 4

As far as roles in the process, students should drive the process. Students should be the ones that are completing the college applications, writing their essays, and contacting Counselors & Teachers with questions or requests for recommendations.

Students should complete the Letter of Rec form found on the Guidance Website ([www.nvhsguidance.com](http://www.nvhsguidance.com)). Counselors and Teachers will need this form in order to write a letter. Students can fill it out once and send or share with multiple faculty.

Students should request official SAT or ACT scores from the testing agency. We'll talk more about these scores later in the presentation.

Students should request transcripts in their Parchment account. No transcripts will be sent without a request in Parchment. More about this later as well.

Students should complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This is the one form where they will need parental help. We will talk about financial aid later in the presentation.

Students should continue the research they have been doing during Junior year. Normally we encourage campus visits, but those may have to be virtual this year. Students should be scouring college websites to understand admission requirements, scholarships and grants available through the college, as well as what the application deadlines are for each college.

## Slide 5

As a parent, we ask that you discuss whether a college is the right fit for your child, academically, personally, and financially. We want students to graduate with as little debt as possible.

Students will need parental help to fill out the FAFSA given the financial information that is required.

We ask that you help remind your child to meet deadlines.

We also ask that if there are questions throughout the process, that the students are the ones in communication with their Counselor. It is fine to have them cc a parent on an email to the Counselor, but our Seniors are at a point where they need to develop more independence and responsibility, and the college application process is the perfect opportunity to help develop this.

## Slide 6

The Counselor will be writing letters of recommendation as well as completing any other reports, forms, and evaluations a college may require. We will also be working with our Secretary to submit transcripts and these supporting materials to colleges. We will begin to send these materials in September, which is the agreed upon timeline between high schools and colleges through the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC).

We will be available as a resource to students throughout the process. Given our remote learning start, we will be available to work with students through a mutually agreed upon method, whether that be email, phone calls, or Zoom meetings.

## Slide 7

We would like to share some resources that will aid you in the process. SchoolLinks is our college and career search tool. Students can access it through links on the Guidance Website and the Student Splash Page. They only need to then click on 'Sign in with Google' and they will automatically be taken into the site.

## Slide 8

We have also found these websites to have been very helpful to students and parents in the college search and application process.

## Slide 9

Students often wonder how many applications they should submit. It really varies by student, but the typical student applies to about 3-7 colleges. Some students may only apply to one, such as students who have committed athletically to a college or students who have decided to start their education at College of DuPage, which is open admission. Some students apply to many colleges. However, we encourage students to do the research first to find the right fit. Applying to a large number of colleges can result in spending too much money on application fees and too much time on college applications.

## Slide 10

There are some strategies to which colleges you select for application.

Be sure that you have at least ONE Safety school on your list. There is nothing wrong with having more than one safety school. A safety school is defined as academically & financially a good fit and your credentials indicate an extremely strong possibility of admission. Some students may use College of DuPage as their safety school since it is open admission.

Students, talk to your parents about financial cost. Be prepared to use your safety school. It has to be a place you would feel comfortable attending.

We don't want you to find out too late that your dream school is not affordable. Be sure to check your colleges' websites for their Net Cost Calculator. All colleges are mandated to have these estimators online.

## Slide 11

Target Schools are defined as colleges where your credentials are within the range of published admission standards.

Colleges typically publish their median or average range of test scores and GPA's that were admitted from the previous year's class. For example, if a college's average range of ACT scores admitted is 22-26, then remember this means that 50% of students had an ACT between 22-26, 25% were admitted with an ACT lower than 22, and 25% were admitted with an ACT higher than 26.

Remember if you are targeted for admission, this does not guarantee admission. You must have a safety school.

## Slide 12

Reach Schools are defined as colleges where your credentials are barely at or below published admission standards.

Also, please note that all highly, highly selective schools (such as Ivy League or comparable) should be considered Reach schools for everyone. A highly, highly selective school is a school that admits only about 7-20% of their applicant pool. Which means that at least 80% of the students applying are denied. Of these students, the vast majority are very qualified students that could be successful at the university and be an asset to the university. However, only a limited amount of students can be admitted to these universities.

## Slide 13

Once you start a college application, what is on them?

In addition to personal demographic information, there are hard factors including grades, test scores, and rigor of curriculum. We send a school profile to each college to help them understand the context of an education at Neuqua.

Some colleges may ask for soft factors such as interests/activities, essays, personal statement, and letters of recommendation. Not all colleges require these items. For example, the University of Illinois in Urbana/Champaign does not require letters of recommendation and they do not accept them. DO NOT send them to a university in such a case.

Specialty programs such as Fine Arts may also require a portfolio.

Many of the Ivy/Highly Selective schools may recommend or require a personal interview.

Slide 14

A visit to the college's website will indicate what type of application they use. Some may use their own homegrown application. Others may use the Common App, a platform used by nearly 900 colleges. There is also a relatively new platform called the Coalition App. Some colleges may offer more than one of these platforms to apply. There is no advantage to using one over the other if you have a choice.

Slide 15

Normally, many colleges require a standardized test score, either SAT or ACT. However, given the pandemic situation, the majority of colleges have moved to test optional for the Class of 2021, meaning you do not have to submit a score to apply. You can consult your college's website or [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org) to determine the college's current policy.

Currently, District 204 is planning on administering the SAT in school on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. It is a State of Illinois graduation requirement to take the SAT.

If choosing to send your score to a college, you can choose four colleges for free when you take the test. Otherwise, you must request on the SAT or ACT website that scores be directly sent to your college ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)), where there is a fee. SAT and ACT scores are not listed on District 204 transcripts, and we cannot send scores to colleges for you.

Slide 16

Once you are ready to complete a college application, follow these steps:

Complete and submit the college application via the college's website or application platform. Please note that District 204 does not rank its students, so you should indicate on your application that your school does not rank when asked for your rank.

For Common App, you must complete FERPA first (this is a question that asks if you waive your right to see your application materials AFTER being accepted to and enrolled in the university) and list and invite your Counselor. If you do not complete this step, you will receive an email from Common App indicating your Counselor has not completed their materials. But that would be because if you don't complete FERPA and enter your Counselor's email address, the link will not be sent to your

Counselor! Also, if you do not invite your Counselor in Common App, you will be prevented from requesting a transcript be sent to Common App in Parchment.

Request an official ACT / SAT report from test reporting companies. Again, NVHS DOES NOT SEND TEST SCORES!

ALL transcript requests must be done in Parchment. No transcripts will be sent without a request in Parchment. When using Common App, you must request the transcript be sent to Common App, not directly to the university. Once you request a transcript be sent to Common App, it can be used for all colleges you are applying to via Common App.

Slide 17, 18, 19

Parchment is a secure transcript delivery service. Students created their account during Guidance Essentials and were instructed to use their personal email address to do so (this is so that they can still access Parchment after graduation). The link can be found on the Guidance website, and students should select Existing User to log in. No transcripts will be sent to colleges without a request in Parchment.

Slide 20

When requesting transcripts and letters of recommendation/Counselor reports, students should plan on allowing 10 school days before a college's deadline. For example, if your college's application deadline is October 15, you must request materials from us by September 30. We will send Remind texts and post in the Senior House Google Classroom as we approach these deadlines. Students should also be sure to ask a teacher 2 weeks before a letter is due. Note that when asking a teacher for a letter of rec, it is the student's responsibility to communicate to the teacher how the letter gets to the university. In Common App, students list their teacher's email address and a link is sent to the teacher. But if a college were to require the teacher to send it directly to the college by some other means, the student should let the teacher know that. Teacher letters of rec do not get processed through the Counselor.

Slide 21

The Common App is a very 'common' application platform, with nearly 900 universities using it. What each college requires in Common App varies, but there are essay questions, Counselor reports, and often Letters of Recommendation required. College application fees vary, but average around \$60 per application, going as high as \$90 for some. As we said earlier, the student must answer the FERPA question and invite their Counselor, or else we will be unable to complete the Counselor section. You will also not be able to request a transcript be sent to Common App in Parchment if you do not invite your Counselor in Common App.

Slide 22

When requesting a transcript in Parchment for Common App colleges, request that the transcript be sent to Common App, not directly to the university. Some colleges will require a midyear report be sent in January. If you are no longer pursuing admission

to such a university in January, you can ignore that. However, if it is still a college on your list, you will need to request another transcript in January. We will communicate in January when 1<sup>st</sup> semester transcripts are ready for delivery. In June, your final transcript will be sent to the college you plan to attend, which you will indicate at Senior Checkout.

#### Slide 23

These are some examples of colleges that have moved to self-reported transcripts on applications, where you enter the classes and grades which are verified later by the college when they receive your final transcript. Transcripts in Synergy are still being processed as summer grades are being added. However, for now, you can request a transcript in Parchment be sent to yourself, which has grades and GPA up through the end of Junior year. This will be a transcript from the old student system.

#### Slide 24

##### Early Decision and Early Action

We want to take a minute to briefly address these terms as you may come across them or have heard them.

EARLY DECISION is a binding agreement between the college and the student. Because this is a binding contract, students can only apply to one college Early Decision. The college will have a form that requires a counselor/student/parent signature. As counselors we will have a conversation with students and parents before signing the form to see if there any questions.

EARLY ACTION or PRIORITY DEADLINE - you apply early and get a decision early - rules vary by college, but it typically just means you will get an earlier response. Be sure to read your applications carefully. We encourage students to meet early deadlines if they are sure they want to apply to that college.

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION - Applicants do not apply to any other private college/university under their Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, Early Decision or Early Notification program. Applicants may apply to other colleges and universities under their Regular Decision option, which have later deadlines.

#### Slide 25

Once you have submitted an application, you can follow up by checking your application account to see what materials have been received. If there is an issue with your application, you can ask your Counselor for help in identifying the issue, but you may need to contact the Admissions Office of the college, as they are in control of your application. You can check Parchment to view which transcripts have been sent.

Colleges that operate on rolling admission will typically give you a decision within a few weeks after all materials have been received. Other colleges have a decision date where all applicants receive their decision on the same day.

#### Slide 26

Students planning to complete athletically at the Division I or II level need to register an account with the NCAA at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). You will also need to send your SAT or ACT score to NCAA. This must be requested in Parchment. Students must also meet the 16 core course requirement. NCAA is offering some flexibility in the wake of Covid-19, but speak to your Counselor if you feel you will not meet the regular requirements.

Slide 27

NAIA is another athletic organization for some colleges, and you should follow similar directions as NCAA. Info can be found at [www.playnaia.org](http://www.playnaia.org).

Slide 28

We normally hold a Financial Aid Night in September. The date and method for this year's presentation is To Be Determined. The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the first step in applying for financial aid at any college. Current Seniors can start their FAFSA on October 1st. Completing the FAFSA is now a graduation requirement in the State of Illinois. The State has indicated there will be a waiver process for families who do not want to complete the FAFSA, however the waiver process has not yet been communicated to us.

All colleges have a net price calculator or financial aid estimator on their websites to help estimate the cost. Some more highly selective colleges may require that the CSS Profile is completed in addition to the FAFSA if families are applying for financial aid. Students should first check with their college's financial aid office and website for college specific scholarships. Additional helpful websites can be found on the Guidance website under the College and Career tab. As local scholarship opportunities are shared with us, we will share that info with you.

Slide 29

If you want some tips for writing a college essay, Gillian Schneider, NVHS English teacher, will host a College Essay Writing Tips Zoom session on September 14, 1:30-2:30 p.m. You can sign up via the link on this slide.

Slide 30

Also, the Senior Counselors are planning on holding College Application Workshops via Zoom on September 17 and 18 for students who at that point are still in need of further assistance with their college applications.

Slide 31

As you move through the process, we are here to support you. Students should initiate contact with their Counselor via email, as we may be working from home and not near our office phones. If support is needed beyond email, we can arrange a call or Zoom with you.

Finally, take a deep breath. The process can seem intimidating now, but once you get through it, you will see it wasn't so bad, and you will soon be on your way to your exciting future!