



SAINT ANSELM'S

ABB EY S C H O O L

College Planning Guide

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the St. Anselm's *College Planning Guide* is to be a resource for parents and students during the complex process of moving from high school to college. A successful transition takes considerable planning and time, and the *Guide* is designed to provide broad suggestions for navigating the major stages as well as offer specific, targeted recommendations for certain key events.

Using this *Guide* is just one facet of the college planning process. A student's parents, teachers, coaches, relatives, and friends must play supportive roles during the many months of decision-making. The ultimate responsibility for much of the work, however, falls to the student. Each must take the initiative to research appropriate college choices, seek opportunities to enhance his chances for admission to the schools of his choice, and ask for timely assistance when necessary.

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Our Mission and Philosophy

The College Counseling Office promotes the mission of St. Anselm's Abbey School through its services to the schoolwide community. College placement is considered within the context of the spiritual, intellectual, and personal development and achievement of each boy. Counselors, advisors, teachers, coaches, parents and students are partners in this process. The goal is that each boy will attend a college or university that is appropriate for his continuing development into adult life.

School Reference Information

College Counseling Office
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Washington, DC 20017

Counseling Office: 202-269-2375
School Office: 202-269-2350
School and Counseling Office Fax: 202-269-2373
www.saintanselms.org

St. Anselm's CEEB or High School Code: 090155

College Counseling Website: www.saintanselms.org/college

Naviance Family Connection: student.naviance.com/stanselms



II. Understanding Some College Application Basics

Factors That Determine Admission

There is no single determining factor in an applicant's admission – there is no magic formula. Most colleges rely heavily on the comparative rigor of the high school college preparatory program, the GPA, standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, the application essays, and extracurricular activities. Each college and university uses its own unique process to assess an applicant's qualifications. While one small, private college may have a leaning toward leadership qualities and community service involvement in a prospective student, another similar college may be looking for a student who can benefit from its research facilities or specialized programs. Other colleges, however, may take a more holistic approach.

College Preparatory Program The best indicator of student success in college is his daily performance in a demanding college preparatory program. Colleges do not compare high schools-- they compare students. Admissions officers will look to see if a student has taken advantage of the academic opportunities available in high school. To be competitive at a time when colleges are experiencing a significant increase in the number of applications, a student should present a record with the highest level of a course offered in the core subjects: English, history, math, science, and foreign language. In general, very selective colleges like to see eight to ten AP courses on a student's record. It is also important to show the most competitive colleges that you are a well-rounded student, so if a student is contemplating majoring in English or a social science, he should also take both an AP math course and an AP science course.

Course Grades Each college will examine the grades in the courses listed on your transcript. The transcript lists semester grades for each course in grades nine through 12, and admissions officers will compare first and second semester course grades to see if they remained consistent between semesters. Has the student gradually improved his grades in a subject over the course of the year? Colleges will look for patterns like this.

Colleges are also concerned about the student's overall performance. Each year, a GPA (Grade Point Average) is computed on a 4.0 scale. Colleges pay particular attention to the GPA in grades 10 through the first semester of grade 12, as the difficulty of courses increases, and admissions officers like to see improving grades and an increase in the GPA; inconsistency or a decline in the GPA can have a strong negative effect on the way an application is viewed! A downward trend in grades will require some written explanation from the student and his counselor.

Class Rank St. Anselm's does not rank students based upon GPA. However, some scholarship programs, ROTC programs, and the U.S. service academies require identification of class rank, and in these cases, it will be calculated.

Test Scores Some colleges may have cutoff SAT and ACT combined scores for admission. Most, however, consider the scores within the context of a student's total profile. Colleges will view all scores submitted by ACT and the College Board, but they focus on the highest or best score in each category when they evaluate an applicant. High standardized test scores cannot take the place of a candidate's high school academic program and GPA. Do the student's test scores mirror his GPA? Colleges don't want a test taker-- they want a student who will perform and achieve in their curriculum.

Letters of Recommendation Some colleges, particularly large state universities, do not require recommendations and will not read any even if they are sent. Most schools, however, require two teacher letters in addition to the counselor letter.

Letters of recommendation are helpful as they reveal qualities of an applicant not evident from other components of the entire application. Quantity is never better than quality, and sending more letters than required can even undermine an applicant. College admissions staff may think, “Is this student’s record so weak that he has to have so many people speak on his behalf?” An additional letter from an employer, internship supervisor, or an alumna or alumnus who knows you well is an exception.

Recommendation letters are confidential, and they will be mailed to colleges on your behalf only by the College Counseling Office.

Counselor Recommendation—Most colleges that use the Common Application and many others as well require a counselor letter. This usually consists of a general-questions form section and then a letter written by the college counselor. The first part requires the applicant to complete information on current courses, provide personal data, and agree to a confidentiality statement regarding personal access to the counselor’s letter. A student should waive his right to access the contents of the letter, because this assures the college admissions office that the letter is an honest appraisal of the student.

Your counselor completes the form with information about your GPA and character. Insights gleaned from your advisor, coaches, classroom teachers, parents, self-assessment, and interviews are used to describe your strengths within the context of your academic performance and participation in extracurricular activities.

Teacher Recommendation—You must ask a teacher to write you a letter of recommendation if the college requires it. Some universities do not require teacher recommendations, and they will even request that none be sent.

There are usually two parts to the teacher recommendation. The first is completed by the student and includes applicant information, waiver of the right to access, and signature. The teacher completes a second section by responding to questions on a list of the applicant’s personal qualities, such as motivation, integrity, leadership, intellectual promise, and maturity.

College admissions officers regularly state that teacher recommendations are important factors when weighing a candidate’s files because the letters can share significant positive information that a student might withhold out of modesty or the difficulty of self-evaluation.

Before the end of your junior year, ask possible teacher recommenders if they will write a letter in support of your application. That will give them the summer to review the websites of your potential college choices and to begin to draft a good letter. Give your recommender a copy of your self-assessment and résumé and share with them your reasons for seeking admission to specific colleges. As many details as reasonable will help a teacher to write an accurate and supportive letter. A teacher recommender has the right to decide **not** to write a recommendation, even though this is a rare exception. The reasons may vary: a teacher believes that he or she does not know you well enough; your performance in a course or courses was not strong; or you have asked for a recommendation **at the very last minute** (don’t do this!)

Essay The college essay is a critical piece of your application. As colleges review an increased number of applications, how can one student stand out when most of the candidates have good grades in a demanding high school program? The essay can make a real difference – a face emerges from the pile of papers and dry statistics.

The essay can show how well you can analyze and write at the college level. Also, your passion, humor, enthusiasm, and ideology will be evident. Finding a unique “hook” to capture the attention of the admissions officers could make all the difference, because they read many, many essays dealing with the same topic. As one college representative commented, “If you write about Gandhi or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it better be the best essay ever written on the subject.”

Activities Participation in extracurricular activities demonstrates your values and interests and reveals another aspect of your character. Participation in these activities can enhance your application. Colleges are not interested in a laundry list of activities meant to impress them. Rather, commitment to a few activities shows a genuine interest, passion, and a responsibility to take charge of your learning experience. Literally hundreds of applicants have been team captains, yearbook editors, or student council officers. What will make you stand out from other applicants is what you accomplished in your particular role. Document your extracurricular achievements in depth in your résumé.

Other These are some additional factors that may improve your chances during the admissions process.

Legacy—If you are the son of an alumnus or alumna, you will receive a closer look. Having a sibling currently attending the college may also give you special consideration. The importance of legacy varies among colleges. Don't overemphasize the importance of legacy. It has become less of an influential factor for most colleges with every new year of college admissions.

Underrepresented/Minority Group Status—Colleges want a diverse student body. If you belong to an ethnic group that has traditionally been underrepresented in a college, you may receive more attention.

Geographic Diversity—Colleges also like to have a geographically diverse student body with members from as many states and foreign countries as possible, because this wide representation creates a rich cultural environment on campus. A qualified student from an underrepresented locale or state may have an advantage in the admissions process.

Special Talent—Athletes, artists, actors, and musicians can be especially attractive applicants, because they can contribute to the extracurricular life of a college. For example, if you are a member of a crew team and have high school experience in a specific position, a college may be looking for an academically qualified student to fill that same position on its crew team. This may give you an advantage. Even if you don't play sports at the varsity level, colleges may give special attention to high school athletes who could still support college athletics through their participation in intramurals, pep clubs, and as team managers. And a student with significant theater tech crew experience could be an attractive candidate to a college for its theater or general production activities. Students who have outstanding musical or writing or artistic talents might also receive special consideration, depending upon the college and the student's intended course of study.

College Major—A college may have special academic programs and particular departmental strengths. A student who wants to double major in engineering and art history may give that applicant special consideration, or a student who wishes to major in English but also pursue a pre-med program may be highly desirable. Small colleges that can boast about their modern science centers full of cutting-edge technology may give the potential physics major an advantage over the history and political science major. Some colleges, famous for science and engineering, may be looking for more humanities and social science majors to round out their student population.

Communication—One way to categorize applicants is through recognition of individuals who have demonstrated significant interest in a particular college, and the earlier that starts, the better. College visits, responding with an information card, email questions, and talking to a college representative at a fair or school meeting can make a student stand out.

Financial Aid

A college education is one of the costliest investments a family can make, so students must discuss the cost of college with their parents during the preliminary college search process. Colleges recognize that most families will find it challenging to finance a college education, and they do not want to turn away excellent candidates whose families cannot afford the expense of tuition, room, and board. Institutions find ways to help students and families meet college costs with financial aid. Most forms of financial aid are need-based and include loans, grants, and work-study opportunities.

Loans—These are often the most significant portion of a financial aid awards package and are paid back with interest once the borrower graduates from college. Interest rates on student loans are normally less than eight percent. An employed graduate should be able to make low monthly payments on his loans with no trouble at all.

Grants—In general, grants do not have to be repaid and are disbursed either by the state or federal government, or sometimes directly by the college or university.

Work-Study—This type of financial aid requires the student to take a job on campus upon enrollment. These jobs are normally part-time, and the pay is well above minimum wage. Money earned by the student through work-study can be paid directly toward tuition or given to the student to use for books, living expenses, and other campus fees.

You cannot receive financial aid unless you apply for it. You do not need to wait until you have been admitted to a college to apply for financial aid, so the earlier you apply, the better your chances of receiving the needed financial assistance. The applications are not very difficult or time-consuming, but they will involve the help of your parents and will require them to submit your family's recent income tax returns.

To be eligible for financial aid, all students must fill out a **FAFSA** form. **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** forms are sent to a federal government clearinghouse that uses the information to determine overall financial need based on family income and assets. You can submit your **FAFSA** online at www.fafsa.ed.gov starting January 1-- no **FAFSA** forms will be accepted before that date. We strongly encourage you to submit the **FAFSA** as soon as possible. At the **FAFSA** website, students can also get more information about Federal Pell Grants, Federal Stafford Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work-Study, and Perkins Loans.

Once you have completed a **FAFSA** application, you will be provided with a **Student Aid Report (SAR)**, which summarizes the information that you have submitted on your **FAFSA** form. The **SAR** is sent to the colleges and universities you have listed on your **FAFSA** form. **EFC**, or **Expected Family Contribution**, appears on page one of your **SAR** and indicates the amount of money your family is expected to be able to contribute toward financing your education. The schools that receive your **SAR** will use it to determine the types and amount of aid for which you qualify. They will attempt to distribute funds to make it possible for you to attend the school.

Some colleges and universities require an additional form called the **CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service)**. This information helps colleges assess what aid a student might need in addition to the federal aid that a student qualifies for based on the **FAFSA** calculations. Parents and students should pay close attention to the deadline for submission of this form. The **CSS Profile** should be completed in the early fall of a student's senior year, to ensure proper consideration. Apply online at [CSS Profile](#).

Both the **FAFSA** and **CSS Profile** must be filed no later than **February 1**. If you qualify for financial aid, the college will notify you by a letter containing a financial aid package.

For more information on financial aid and scholarship programs specific to residents of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, come into the College Counseling Office or visit the websites listed below.

Maryland Higher Education Commission	www.mhec.state.md.us
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia	www.schev.edu
District of Columbia Tuition Grant Program (TAG)	dconeapp.dc.gov/appforms/seologon.aspx

This program for DC residents provides sizeable grants to defray tuition costs at many state colleges and private Historically Black Colleges throughout the U.S.

Scholarships that are not need-based are also available. Many nonprofit organizations offer small monetary gifts that require a student to write an essay, submit a transcript, and participate in an interview. Some scholarship programs like this are also targeted to specific ethnic groups and are available only to young people involved in organizations like the Boy Scouts of America. Consult the following scholarship sponsors to see if you qualify.

American Legion	www.legion.org
Brotherhood of Elks	www.elks.org
Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)	www.dar.org
Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)	www.sar.org

There are numerous ways to identify possible scholarships; browsing the Internet, searching the financial aid and scholarship pages of college websites, seeking the assistance of a reference librarian, and contacting the College Counseling Office. Some Internet resources include the sites listed below.

www.fastaid.com	www.salliemae.com
www.scholarships.com	www.scholarshipexperts.com

A thorough source for financial aid research is *Financial Aid for Students: Print and Web Guides*, published by the Congressional Research Service.

Free scholarship search engines are available through the sites below.

The College Board	www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/index.html?affiliateId=rdr&bannerId=pay
FastWeb	www.fastweb.com
FinAid	www.finaid.org

Parents may also want to research college savings plans at the websites below.

www.savingforcollege.com
www.collegesavings.org

Beware of Scholarship Scams! There are companies that claim that they can match students with scholarships but are in fact fraudulent. Beware of any such bold claims. If you have questions about such companies, contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [FTC Scholarship Scams](#).

III. The College Search Process

Selecting Colleges for Application

Before you can make your list of which colleges you will apply to, you need to think about your interests, talents, goals, and dreams. Completing the College Counseling Office's [*Student Self-Assessment for College Planning*](#) will help you identify and understand these important aspects of your life. Your goal is to identify colleges that you can afford and where you will be happy – the colleges you select should match your ability, academic interests, and social needs. Once you have thought about these things and discussed them with your family, friends and counselors, you will have an easier time sorting through the hundreds of choices. Below are some factors to consider as you research colleges.

Academics One of the most important areas to investigate is the academic curriculum. If you want to study a combination such as engineering and film or business and international relations, you will need to look for colleges that offer both liberal arts and career programs. Because of the education offered at St. Anselm's, many Abbey boys want to pursue the broad studies in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences provided by liberal arts colleges. Some colleges have a core curriculum that requires students to complete courses in a variety of disciplines in addition to an undergraduate major. Other colleges have curricula that are less structured and allow the student to plan a highly individualized academic program. As you peruse department requirements and courses, check for breadth of courses and gaps. Does the library support the program you want, or will you have to depend upon interlibrary loan? Do opportunities for independent research exist? What's the average class size in a first-year course compared to that in an upper-level class in your field? How does the college accommodate students with a documented learning difference or physical disability? Look at the credentials for the faculty in your proposed college major. Do graduates compete successfully for post-graduate study and interesting employment opportunities?

Accommodation of Learning Differences Increasingly, many colleges have hired specially trained staff and employed practices to support students with diagnosed learning differences. Before entering a college, a student will need to have valid documentation prepared by a psycho-educational or other qualified evaluator. The documentation explains a recognized learning difference and is accompanied by recommended academic accommodation. The student will then be required to submit those records to the colleges.

Type of Institution St. Anselm's students have experienced the culture of a small, single-sex Catholic school with required religion courses, community service, and regular religious worship that focuses attention on individual student development. An Abbey student may, consequently, want to continue his studies at a similar college. Most boys will choose a coeducational college after four to seven years at an all-male high school. However, some who prefer a traditional experience may want to continue in a men's college like Hampden-Sydney, Wabash, Morehouse, or St. John's University. Public and private institutions often have significant differences in cost, admissions selectivity, academic offerings, and diversity.

Size Although the size of a college is not an indicator of its quality, it will have an impact on your experience. Size may permit some colleges to offer more concentrations within a specific major and have a wider range of electives available in a department. It can also affect class size and the teacher-student classroom interaction. Numerous other aspects of campus life are often related to the size of a college: significant contact with professors rather than teaching assistants; access to special athletic, research, and technology facilities; social conditions, such as the impact of fraternities and sororities on campus life; the models on which dormitory life is organized; and student flight on weekends.

Location How far away from home would you like to be? Would you prefer a college in a large city, in a suburban setting, or in a small town? What type of climate do you prefer? These are all important questions you need to ask yourself. You should not eliminate a good school, however, just because you don't want to live in a small town or the school is located in the Snow Belt. Also, you might prefer living quite far away from home and experiencing a different regional culture.

Facilities Facilities reveal many things about a college: awareness of the variety of technological and specialized demands of the contemporary research, teaching, and learning community; responsiveness to changing economic and social structures; rigor of particular academic programs; commitment to providing for the athletic and recreational needs of its students; and access to substantive financial support from the larger community. These need to be taken into account as you assess each college.

Selectivity Colleges nationwide have experienced an increase in the number of applications received for the past several years. This helps colleges raise their standards for admission and intensifies the competition among candidates. College admissions representatives communicate that students should present a record with eight to ten AP courses, including the highest math and science they can complete in their high school, regardless of their intended major. Courses in business, engineering, and non-English literatures in translation, anthropology, etc. are good, but colleges prefer the AP courses because those classes and exams represent a common standard, like the SAT and ACT tests, on which to evaluate students.

You must always keep in mind your GPA and standardized test score results when you are evaluating the selectivity of a college. College guides, like Peterson's and *The College Handbook* published by the College Board provide GPA information, average SAT/ACT test scores, and acceptance rates. You may also consult the College Counseling Office for information on the scattergram section of Naviance Family Connection. You can compare your information with the statistics of earlier Abbey graduates to determine your chances for admission.

Cost Each year, expenses associated with higher education steadily increases, but in general, colleges do not want a qualified student to refrain from applying because of the cost of tuition, room and board, books and travel.

Families need to have a sure sense of what they will be able to pay each year toward a college education. If financial aid will be necessary, you should investigate the types of aid available at each college of interest. What types of scholarships are available? If you will receive financial assistance, how much debt might you have upon graduation? If you are planning to attend graduate or professional school, you may not want to incur any debt when you complete your undergraduate degree.

Intercollegiate Athletics Athletes who participated in high school sports programs may want to continue in college. This may enhance an applicant's chances for admission to some colleges and may also be an opportunity to receive scholarship funds. It is important, however, for an athlete to be realistic about his abilities. A potential college athlete should talk to his coach(es) about the likelihood of involvement in competitive intercollegiate athletics.

College athletes are truly scholar-athletes. They maintain rigorous academic and sports schedules and must perform at a satisfactory level of achievement specified by each college and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). If you are interested, ask your coach to recommend some appropriate colleges and to contact the coaches at those schools. You can also contact coaches at various colleges of interest to you. It would be helpful to talk to St. Anselm's alumni you know or other athletes who may be playing on college teams when you make your college visits. If you plan to play Division I or Division II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Clearinghouse. The NCAA Clearinghouse determines each athlete's eligibility by checking whether or not he has graduated from high school, earned a minimum GPA, and earned minimum SAT or ACT scores. You must register with the Clearinghouse at www.ncaa.org during the application season, but not before the start of your senior year, to ensure that your paperwork is in process as recruiters consider your credentials.

Research

Once you have considered the characteristics of your model college, it's time to find colleges with those characteristics. Research can take a lot of time, but the more information you have about potential colleges, the better you will be able to use your time wisely by applying to schools that are a true match for you.

Students should apply to colleges within three reach categories: high, average, and security. While it is difficult to define these categories for students in general, a college or university that accepts fewer than 30% of the applicants should be considered a high reach for students. An average reach college accepts 50-60% of its applicants. Appropriate examples of the three reach categories will vary, particularly depending on a particular student's GPA.

Information Resources

There are many resources at your disposal for researching and selecting college to which you want to apply. Some of them are listed below, and several are expanded upon after this brief introduction.

[Naviance and Family Connection](#)—This proprietary Internet-based set of tools, which is customized for St. Anselm's, is explained and demonstrated in a workshop given by the St. Anselm's computer and technology department. Every family is given an account and a password.

College Guides—A good way to begin is to get an overview of a college through comprehensive guides like [The College Handbook](#), [Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges](#), [The Princeton Review](#), and [Barron's Profile of American Colleges](#). Colleges that pique your interest can then be researched more fully.

Student Search Service—All St. Anselm's students take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) at the beginning of their Form IV and Form V years. As part of the PSAT registration paperwork, students have the opportunity to be recruited by colleges, based on the personal information they provide on the registration form and their test score results. Read through this "junk mail" and, if the college looks interesting, send in the reply card to learn more.

College Representative Visits to St. Anselm's—Every year, representatives from numerous colleges and universities throughout the country, and occasionally from outside the U.S., make visits to St. Anselm's. They talk with prospective students about opportunities at their colleges and about desirable qualities in candidates for admission. These visits provide an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about a particular college and to make a positive impression on a member of the admissions committee.

College Fairs—Large-scale college fairs are held in the Washington, D.C. area throughout the year. Every April, for example, St. Anselm's participates in the Washington Area Independent School (WAIS) College Fair held at American University's Bender Arena. This is an excellent opportunity to develop and expand your awareness of colleges and to learn what to look for in a college. College representatives in attendance will offer you a student information card to fill out and return. This contact can be important if you later apply to that college, because the reviewers will note your earlier interest as they read your application profile.

College Catalogue Collection—The College Counseling Office maintains a library of current college catalogues and viewbooks. The catalogue is good for descriptions of majors, general academic requirements, policies, etc., and viewbooks are glossy, colorful booklets that usually showcase interviews with students and professors, pictures of the campus, and information about student life, activities and athletics.

College Search Websites—The Internet is the fastest way to research colleges. Through a college's website, you can access the catalogue of courses, get information about athletics and social life, contact an office, department, or professor, download campus maps and application materials, and take a virtual tour. Below are many useful sites that can assist you in identifying colleges to research further.

Planning and Individual Assessment Internet Resources

www.act.org
www.allaboutcollege.com
www.collegeconnectors.com
www.collegeNet.com
www.college-visits.com
www.collegeboard.com
www.collegemajors101.com
www.collegebound.net
www.commonapp.org (The Common Application)
www.fastweb.com
www.makecollegecount.com
www.mycollegeguide.org
www.myroad.com (The College Board)
www.petersons.com (Peterson's)
www.review.com (The Princeton Review)
www.xap.com

College Admission Offices

National Association of Independent
Colleges and Universities www.naicu.edu

International Colleges and Universities

Canadian Universities www.universitystudy.ca
General Education Online www.findaschool.org
Study in Canada www.studyincanada.com

Catholic-Affiliated Institutions

Association of Catholic
Colleges and Universities www.accunet.org
Association of Jesuit Colleges
and Universities www.ajcunet.edu
Catholic College Admissions www.catholiccollegesonline.org

College Representative Visits and College Fairs

Each fall, approximately 60 colleges send admissions office staff to St. Anselm's to meet students and to make a presentation about their college's programs and opportunities. Each student is presented with a unique and important opportunity to make personal contact with an individual who can assist him in being admitted to that college. The representative who visits in the fall usually will be the person reading and evaluating your application. This person, if he or she leaves with a positive impression of you, can be a great advocate for your acceptance. It is essential to make a positive first impression and to maintain contact with this individual as much as possible without being pushy during the application process.

Scheduling and other information about upcoming college visits is posted on the [Naviance](http://www.naviance.com) website. Students must register in advance through Naviance in order to attend a college rep visit, and the student must get the approval of his classroom teacher **at least one day in advance of the scheduled meeting.**

On The Day of The Meeting

- Come to the meeting neat and well-dressed.
- Offer a firm handshake when meeting the representative and tell him or her your full name.
- Maintain eye contact and listen attentively during his or her presentation.
- Ask relevant questions that demonstrate your intelligence.
- Complete an applicant interest card if the representative has some.
- Be genuine and confident in yourself.
- Don't overdo your love for the school; just be sincere and frank about your interest in attending that college.

When the session is over, shake hands again, ask the representative for a business card so you may contact him or her. Thank the representative for coming to St. Anselm's.

Questions to Ask a College Representative

- How can I arrange a campus tour? An overnight visit?
- What percentage of courses is taught by professors?
- What is the typical class size?
- What study abroad programs are offered at your college/university?
- What percentage of students is accepted into graduate school?
- What is the level of technology on your campus?
- What resources are available for students who need tutoring or untimed testing?
- Does your college/university offer internship programs and assist with off-campus employment?
- What percentage of students reside on campus? What are some of the weekend experiences and opportunities at your college/university?
- What role do fraternities and sororities play in the social life of the student?
- Are there safety concerns on campus? How has the college/university addressed these?
- How does the college offer financial assistance?
- What are the opportunities for community service?

After The Meeting

- Follow up with a letter, phone call, or email. In this communication, remind the representative who you are, where you go to school, and what interests you about the college.
- Take the time to ask a question or to request materials by mail, or just thank the representative again for coming to St. Anselm's.
- If you do not get a response, do not write more or call again; just know that college representatives are very busy and that they received your message but just do not have time to respond.

After Your Application Has Been Submitted

- If you have never toured the campus, contact the representative or other staff in the admissions office and ask about tour times, overnight stays, etc. When you visit the campus, try to say hello to that person if he or she happens to be in the admissions office on that day.

Attending a local college fair will also provide you with an opportunity for you to visit with representatives from colleges that do not visit St. Anselm's. You can also meet again with a representative whom you have already met at school. As with the college rep visits, information about these programs is available on the College Counseling website.

College representatives at both visits to St. Anselm's and college fairs will offer you a student information card to fill out and return. This written contact can be important if you later apply to the college, because the admissions application reviewers will note your earlier interest as they read your application profile.

Please ask for the materials (viewbooks, bulletins, pamphlets, etc.) provided by the representative. Remember, the college representative is a salesperson, so he or she will want to give you as many brochures and booklets as you would like to have!

The College Visit

One of the best ways to learn about a college is to schedule a visit. A college can appear quite different when you have spent some time on the campus and have talked to people there. You cannot get the same type of information by reading a viewbook or a catalogue. Each time you visit a college, you get a clearer understanding of what you want for your college experience and can refine your list of potential schools.

There is no perfect time to schedule a college visit. Summer visits are often easier because students and families have more flexibility in scheduling. It can be difficult, however, to get a complete picture of the college because so many of the students and professors are on vacation, and the school is not operating as usual. Spring visits are good for Fifth Form students as they have been researching colleges and have an idea of those they would like to see in person. Sometimes, however, admissions personnel are not available in the spring because they are very involved with admissions review committees. In the fall, you can have an opportunity to visit classes and stay in a dorm, although leaving St. Anselm's classes for a few days early in the academic year to visit colleges can pose its own challenges.

Procedures for handling potential applicants vary among colleges. The St. Anselm's college rep sometimes is able to meet the student if he or she is available on the day of the visit. At other colleges, the rep responsible for St. Anselm's is not permitted to speak with our students. Some admissions offices discourage personal contact during a visit unless the interested student has particular questions.

Most colleges offer an introductory overview talk, often conducted by a member of the admissions staff, and a student-led tour of the campus. At some colleges, a visitor can take a tour that focuses on a particular college major or specialized school within the university. Many colleges do not offer tours on weekends. View the options online and call to confirm before you go. Don't forget to check with the College Counseling Office, as there may be a contact person at the college with whom you should speak.

Visiting colleges can be expensive because you have to travel, find accommodations, dine out for every meal, and buy college souvenirs! Plan your trips so you can readily visit two colleges over a two- to three-day span. You'll wear yourself out visiting 10 colleges in a week, and the experiences and information will become confused. Remember, a summer visit is not always representative of the weather you will experience when you're doing most of your studying there.

Your visit to a college should include the activities below.

- **Sitting in on a class related to your intended field of study or major**—The instructor and the class probably have been pre-selected to represent the typical student class experience. Are most freshman level classes taught by teaching assistants in large lecture halls? Is the class highly participatory or are the students passive? Is the teacher engaging?

- **Speaking with and asking a variety of questions of academic department, special program, admissions, or freshman program personnel**—Does the college require completion of a set of core courses in addition to those for a major? Can a student have a double major or a minor? How extensive are the course offerings and laboratory opportunities for majors? Are internships and job opportunities available in a department? How easy is it to work closely with a professor or other students on projects? Is the curriculum in touch with current trends in academia and the work world? Is the curriculum exclusively liberal arts, or are there more profession-oriented majors?
- **Campus tour**—The first look at a campus can sell it. Is the campus a collection of attractive buildings around a green lawn, or skyscrapers looming over a concrete plaza? Which do you prefer? Are the buildings and grounds kept well? Do the science labs, art and music studios look up-to-date?
- **Spending some time in the library**—A college student will spend plenty of time in the library researching, reading, and studying. Try to find a book in the stacks. How hard or easy was the hunt? Was the staff friendly and helpful? Is the library a comfortable place to work? Will you be able to find what you need, or will you have to depend on the interlibrary loan system? Can you use your student ID card to take books out of other easily accessible college or public libraries near the college?
- **Looking at dorm rooms**—Your dormitory and your room will be your home away from home. Do the rooms look comfortable, or are students squeezed into small cubicles? Are there gathering spaces for students to relax? Are they clean? Are there kitchen and laundry facilities? Do the dorms sponsor activities to create a sense of community? Are the dorms secure?
- **Eating in the cafeteria, commons, or dining hall**—Many schools have food courts where students can find meal options from burgers to a sit-down dinner. Are all of the eateries fast food? Will the food service facilities accommodate special dietary needs? Is there a variety of meal plans available? Is there foodservice on weekends?
- **Checking out the Student Center**—This is often one of the central buildings on a campus and houses book and convenience stores, dining facilities, game rooms, TV lounges, offices and meeting rooms for student activities, a ballroom, post office, communication studios and maybe even a small theater. What facilities are available? Do you see many students engaged in a range of activities? What do the message boards convey about student life?
- **Exploring athletic facilities**—Athletic complexes usually accommodate interscholastic, intramural, club, and recreational sports as well as exercise facilities for all of the students on campus. How accessible are the fitness facilities for students who do not play on a college team? Do you have to reserve a time to use the weight room or exercise machines, saunas, steam baths, or pool? Are the areas clean and maintained well? For colleges located in a cold climate, are there plenty of indoor athletic facilities?
- **Walking around campus on your own**—Observing the ebb and flow of the school community around campus can be very enlightening. Listen to the students and adults in conversation. Are the people friendly, aloof, or apathetic? Is the campus vacant, or do you see students reading on the lawn, talking with friends, playing volleyball and tossing frisbees? As you walk around and look at the buildings, plazas, and greens, would you feel proud to be **there**? As you assess the college, be careful not to make hasty generalizations.

After your visit, you should complete the process.

- **Communicate**—Send a letter or email to the people with whom you spoke to thank them for their time, or ask more questions triggered by the visit.
- **Discuss**—Share your observations and reflections with your classmates, parents, teachers, advisor, college counselor, or an alum you may know from the college.
- **Analyze**—Compare your observations with what you can find in printed and online information.

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IV. The Application Process

Standardized Testing

Test Types

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test)—The PSAT serves as practice for the SAT, and the scores of Form V students determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship competition. All sophomores and juniors take this test in October, and the scores are usually available in December. In addition to scores, the students will receive an analysis of their performance on individual questions and suggestions for studying for the SAT. Information supplied by students during PSAT registration may be passed on to compatible colleges. These colleges may in turn send marketing literature to students.

SAT Reasoning—Most colleges require this test as part of the application process. The four-and-a-half hour test is divided into sections for Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing, and each is scored on a scale of 200-800 points for a combined possible total of 2,400 points. The SAT should be taken for the first time by Form V students as early as March and no later than May in order to evaluate the results and determine if they should take the exam again in October of their senior year. A student can take only the SAT Reasoning Test or the SAT Subject Tests, not both, on any one day.

SAT Subject Tests—SAT Subject Tests are offered in seventeen different subjects and are each an hour long. The Subject Tests are scored the same way as the SAT Reasoning Test, on a scale of 200-800. Colleges have different test requirements, so students must familiarize themselves with those at their target colleges. Many colleges will require two tests, one of which should be the Math Level 1 or Level 2 test, and either a social science or humanities subject test. Some colleges, depending upon the intended field of study, may require specific subject tests. And some colleges may “strongly recommend” that you take three subject tests (this means that you should).

Students may take three subject tests on one test day, but they cannot take a subject test on the same day as the SAT Reasoning Test. The best time to take SAT Subject Tests, such as Math Level 1 and a science test, is in June, because the material is still fresh directly after the St. Anselm’s courses have finished. Seniors may want to take some subject tests, if needed, in October.

ACT (American College Test)—The ACT is an alternative to the SAT, and most colleges will accept the results of this test in lieu of SAT scores. The test consists of four 35-50 minute units: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. Each section is scored on a 12-36 point scale, and a composite score for all four sections is calculated. St. Anselm’s students generally find this to be an easier test than the SAT.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)—Students whose primary language is not English should consider taking this test. It cannot be used a substitute for the SAT or ACT. Some colleges require the score; others do not. Check the admissions requirements of each college to which you seek admission.

Significance of Standardized Tests

While college admissions officers claim that SAT/ACT scores are not the most important factor in determining admission, they are still quite significant. Colleges will expect an applicant’s scores to fall very close to the mean of the range of scores for students who have been previously admitted. At this time the number of applications has been rising dramatically, and colleges have many more qualified candidates than they have class openings. Therefore, a single section score can become a reason to deny admission to an otherwise great applicant.

Registering for the SAT and ACT

The procedures to register for the SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject, and ACT tests are discussed below. **For each test, you will need to indicate the St. Anselm's Abbey School Code—090155— when you register.**

Contact www.collegeboard.com (SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject) or www.actstudent.org (ACT) for registration instructions. After a specific date, a late fee will be assessed. Please note that for the SAT you will have to provide an **acceptable photo** during registration starting with the March 2013 tests. You can continue to register using paper forms, but you will have to attach an acceptable photo onto the registration form. Starting with the March 2013 tests, you will no longer be able to register by phone. Students can register on a wait-list basis, but you will still have to generate a form online, to take with you to a testing site when you try for admission to that test. You will also have to use a credit card online to

Additional SAT Information

SAT Questionnaire—This is not required for test registration. It is recommended, however, that students answer the questions on the form. The questionnaire allows the student to provide information about his interests, activities, and academic background. The Student Search Service (page 11) uses this information to identify potential candidates for admission to a particular college or university.

SAT Student Answer Verification Service—This report will indicate the questions answered correctly and incorrectly and the type and difficulty level of the questions. No actual test questions and answers are included. You can order this report at the time of test registration or up to five months after the date on which you have taken the test. Available for November, December, March, and June test dates. More information is available at sat.collegeboard.com/register/sat-fees.

SAT Question-And-Answer—This service provides the test questions for a specific test date, along with your incorrect answers, the correct answers, and information about the type and difficulty level of each question. Available for some test dates in October, January, and May. More information is available at sat.collegeboard.com/register/sat-fees.

Documented Disabilities

SAT Reasoning/Subject Tests—Students with a documented (formally by a psycho-educational specialist) visual, hearing, or physical learning difference or learning disability can apply for special accommodation. To request an accommodation, you must consult the Head of the Upper School and go to www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student. The school will complete a portion of this form. The College Board review process takes approximately seven weeks. If approved, the student will receive an Eligibility Approval Letter. To register online for tests, you'll enter the SSD code from the letter. To register by mail, a copy of the Eligibility Approval Form must be included with the registration materials.

ACT—Three options are available. **Standard Time with Accommodations** and **Extended Time** (50% time extension), may be taken at an ACT test center. A third option, **Special Testing**, is taken at our school with an extended time (more than 50% extension) and alternate formats. Written documentation is required. For more information, go to www.act.org/aap/disab/index.html.

How To Prepare for Standardized Tests

The best preparation for good results on the SAT or the ACT is the daily hard work required by the St. Anselm's curriculum. In addition, all St. Anselm's students take the PSAT in Fourth and Fifth Forms, which is good practice for taking the SAT or the ACT. The strategies listed below also will help a student to prepare for his tests.

- Careful analysis and consideration of the PSAT test report can expose weak areas. Recommendations are included in the report.
- Free copies of *Preparing for the ACT* and *The SAT Practice Book* are available in the College Counseling Office.
- *The Official SAT Study Guide* and *The Real ACT Prep Guide* are available in libraries and bookstores. They can also be purchased through the College Board and ACT websites.
- ACT practice test questions and a [Question of the Day](#) can be found on www.actonlineprep.com.
- The College Board offers a [Question of the Day](#), the Official SAT Online Course, the Official Online Study Guide, and practice tests at www.collegeboard.com/practice.
- Juniors can take the free mock SAT offered by Revolution Prep (www.revolutionprep.com) at St. Anselm's in January. Result analysis and recommendations provided by Revolution Prep can be helpful in developing an individualized study program, seeking the services of a private tutor, or selecting an SAT/ACT test-preparation course.
- Consult *The Princeton Review* (www.review.com) for information about prep courses and practice tests.

Before Test Day

- Make sure you have several No. 2 pencils, a soft eraser, and a permitted calculator.
- Have your SAT Admission Ticket and acceptable photo ID ready.
- Prepare small snacks to bring with you.
- Be well-rested and ready to go to the test site.
- Make a last-minute check to ensure your test center is open.
- Plan ahead to arrive at the test center with time to spare.

On Test Day

- Be sure to eat a solid, healthy breakfast.
- Give yourself plenty of time to get to the test center. If you're late, you may not be admitted to the test.
- Be sure to test at the center indicated on your Admission Ticket.
- Use breaks to eat any snacks you have brought with you.
- Make sure you use a No. 2 pencil.
- Read the directions and test questions carefully.
- Answer the easy questions first. Go back to answer more difficult questions at the end of each section.
- If you get stuck on a question, eliminate obviously incorrect answer choices to make an educated guess.
- Check your answer sheet to make sure you are marking your answers in the correct ovals.

Sending Scores To Colleges

Each student is responsible for having his SAT/ACT scores sent to colleges. St. Anselm's will send a test score report, which includes all SAT/ACT, junior year PSAT, and AP test scores along with your transcript upon special request only, as colleges do not consider this official notification of SAT/ACT scores. **Each college must receive the scores directly from the College Board and ACT.**

Free score reports will be mailed by College Board or ACT to four colleges as part of the basic test registration fee. This is the fastest way to report scores. After your test registration has been processed, scores reported to additional colleges will require an additional fee.

Rush reporting is available for a fee. Within two days of the scoring, scores will be emailed or sent by first-class mail.

SAT Score Choice Score Choice is an optional service that allows a student to select which SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Test scores will be reported to colleges. Choice of scores for the SAT Reasoning Test is indicated by test date and SAT Subject test by subject. A student cannot select a single section score (Critical Reading of the SAT Reasoning Test) from a test date; all scores for the specific test date will be reported. Go to professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/scores/policy for more information.

In general, colleges will focus on the highest section score if more than one is included in your application. **This is why you should feel comfortable sending all of your SAT scores to colleges.** Some colleges may even require all scores to be sent.

SAT scores are used in different ways by colleges. Some colleges will consider your highest section scores from multiple test dates; other colleges will use the highest composite score from among your test dates. A few colleges still use all of the scores from every test date. You should become familiar with the practice of the colleges you plan to apply to. Consult the College Board's [SAT Score-Use Practices by Participating Institutions](#) for specific information.

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Admission Plans and Application Deadlines

Once you have drafted your list of colleges, you will need to plan a strategy to seek admission. Each standard admission plan has its own deadlines.

Regular Admission Almost all colleges use **January 1** as their regular admission application submission deadline. All application materials must be received before January 1. Some colleges have later deadlines, mainly in February. Applications pile up in the college admissions offices, and it is best not to wait until the last minute to apply because there could be thousands of applicants ahead of you for consideration. Decisions are mailed in late March and early April. You must respond with your choice by May 1.

Rolling Admission Some colleges will offer their decision as soon as an applicant's file is complete. The process usually takes two to four weeks once all the student's materials have been received. An accepted student must submit his notification of intent to enroll by May 1.

Early Decision (ED) If you know exactly which college you'd like to attend, you may want to select this plan. Be aware, however, that you are required to have secured full financing in advance as there is no guarantee of financial aid if you are accepted. **Early Decision is binding; you are required to attend the college if you are accepted. The deadline for submission of all application materials is November 1 or December 1.**

You should apply to other colleges, but you may apply to only one using the Early Decision status. Once you are accepted, you must withdraw your other applications. If accepted, you will need to submit a deposit. Notice of admission/rejection/deferral is usually in mid-December. If you have not researched colleges thoroughly; or if you are depending upon your senior year grades and test scores to improve your chances for admission to college, you should **NOT** choose this option.

Early Action (EA) Many St. Anselm's students select this option. Unlike Early Decision, this is not a binding agreement. **If you choose Early Action, you must submit all of your materials by November 1 or December 1**, and you will receive college admission decisions in January and February. You may apply to any number of schools Early Action. An accepted student must submit his notification of intent to enroll by May 1.

Early Action Single Choice Some colleges offer this admission option. The process is similar to Early Action, but Single Choice Early Action indicates that the college is your first choice. **All the application materials must be received before November 1 or December 1.** You may apply to other schools under regular admission, but you cannot apply to any other schools under Early Action or Early Decision.

Writing Your Résumé

Your résumé is an essential component of your college application process! In addition to your transcript and test scores, college admission directors need to see that you have been involved in extracurricular activities. This involvement can include school-sponsored activities, summer internships, work experiences, community service, and activities with your faith community. The résumé permits you to highlight the broad range of your activities and provide plenty of details of your skills and achievements.

There is no single, correct formula to use when drafting a résumé. The most important quality of your résumé is that it is well-organized and presents information in a format that is easy to read. Some applicants like the appearance of bullets while others prefer to write their information in phrases rather than in complete sentences. You will have to decide what format works best for you. There are sample résumés in the College Counseling Office for you to review. You also may want to experiment with a word processing program's Résumé Wizard feature that provides pre-formatted templates. You can also construct a résumé using the [Naviance](#) A St. Anselm's faculty member gives a résumé-writing workshop every year using the Naviance Family Connection format.

No matter how your résumé looks visually, make sure it reflects what you have accomplished and what you would like an admissions officer to remember about you. Use details and **action verbs** to describe responsibilities and activities. Do not wait until the night before an application is due to begin working on your résumé. A professional résumé takes more than just a few hours to complete and always needs several revisions and edits.

When you compose your résumé, you should consider incorporating activities in the following areas, drawing upon your high school experiences.

- Academic Awards and Honors
- Athletic Awards and Honors
- Community Service Projects
- Extracurricular Activities
- Leadership Positions & Responsibilities
- Sports Activities
- Summer Research/Internship Experiences
- Travel
- Work Experience

The College Essay

“Why do I have to write an essay?” is a question that college counselors hear repeated every year. Answer: the essay lets the admissions staff to get to know you as a person, to get a glimpse of you beyond pure grades and test scores. The admissions staff wants to assess your ability to communicate and to organize your ideas clearly, because a good writer is generally a solid student. In fact, the essay can bring you into the spotlight out of a crowd of applicants with similar academic credentials, and that could be a deciding factor in the admissions decision.

Writing your college essay is often difficult because you have to write about yourself. In many ways, analyzing Hamlet’s motivations in a five-paragraph essay is much easier than writing about a personally significant experience, or who has had the greatest influence on you, or your perspective on an important contemporary issue.

A St. Anselm’s student can definitely write an excellent college essay. You just need time to think about your topic and to get your ideas down on paper. Then you revise and edit your work and have it critiqued. Before you begin this challenging but rewarding process, here are a few suggestions to make the job easier.

- Take time to find and choose the right topic. Colleges receive too many essays from students about playing on an athletic team or why Mother Teresa is a personal hero.
- Consider carefully the phrasing of the essay question. Respond directly to the question or statement.
- Reveal your personality and perspective on life in your essay, no matter what the topic or question.
- Remember that what you write about is less important than how you write the essay.
- Be original. Take a calculated but reasonable risk.
- Use the active voice and be yourself. Don’t use overly-complicated syntax or open the thesaurus too often just to impress the reader.
- Use vivid imagery and concise wording. Paint a picture of yourself in action for the reader.
- Do not try to insert material that doesn’t fit.
- Be confident and persuasive without being arrogant. Convince the admissions staff that it would be wise to accept you, that you are a good investment. Demonstrate your unique potential for the future.

- Use spell check and a dictionary when editing. Set the essays aside for a few days, and then edit and revise again. Read it aloud, by yourself, and you will hear the awkward parts.
- Give each essay to one of the following for critiquing: an English Department faculty member (only one, please) or a college counselor. The College Counseling Office needs to see each essay once before it is submitted. Any reader should receive your essays **at least three weeks** before you send them to colleges.
- Keep copies of your essay on your hard drive, on a CD, on a flash drive and in hard copy, as well as in the College Counseling Office.

Try finishing some of these statements as warm-ups before writing the actual essay.

- The most unusual thing about me is ...
- My ideal job would be ...
- I am most comfortable with myself when ...
- If I could choose someone famous as a dinner companion, it would be ...
- I am most afraid of ...
- If I were stranded on an island and had only three books, they would be ...
- If I won the lottery, I would ...
- The hardest thing I ever had to do was ...
- If I ever became famous, it would be for ...
- My favorite memory is ...

The Importance of Personal Contact

From the fall college representative meetings to local college fairs to the campus tour to the formal interview, a student has many opportunities to make personal contact with individuals who can assist him in being admitted to college.

Never forget that the impression you leave at each point of personal contact can turn into the deciding factor in a college's admission decision. If the other person leaves with a positive impression of you, he or she can be a great advocate for your acceptance.

Formal Interviews

Why interview? Some colleges require each applicant to complete a formal interview. A face-to-face meeting gives you a chance to explain important things about yourself, and a chance to understand and learn more about the college. And of course, the college representative can get an idea of your unique personality. These interviews are conducted either by a member of the admissions staff, a local alumnus/alumna of the college, or sometimes even a current student. It is very important to present yourself in a genuine and mature light. Although the interview is seldom the deciding factor in college admissions, if the student is borderline and the interview is impressive, you could be moved up in the standings. As you prepare, consider the interview tips below.

- Keep up with current events. The interviewer may ask you your opinion on a big news story.
- Review your application essays. Often, you will be asked about them as a conversation icebreaker.
- Gather any documents you might need, such as an unofficial copy of your transcript, a letter from a work or internship supervisor, samples of creative academic work, your résumé, etc.
- Research the college and prepare nuanced questions about the institution that are not available online or in a catalogue.
- Practice with your parents, a friend, a teacher, advisor, coach or counselor at St. Anselm's. Never memorize answers.

- Don't reschedule unless it is absolutely unavoidable; college personnel are extremely busy, and rescheduling can make you appear less interested in that college.
- On the day of the interview, wear what you would wear to dinner at a good restaurant or to be in full and complete school dress code. Do not wear jeans or a baseball cap or sandals.
- Unless the interviewer invites your parents, do not bring them, as it could appear that you can't think, listen, or speak on your own.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early. Most colleges have a long list of interviews scheduled, so if you are late, you may not get all the allotted time for your interview. If you are meeting an alum at Starbucks or at his or her office, don't keep them waiting. They're busy people who volunteer to interview for their alma mater. Whether you interview at the college or at a local site, lateness is a very negative way to begin!
- When you meet the interviewer, you should introduce yourself, shake hands, and smile. Address the interviewer by his or her name, but do not be overly familiar. Practice your introduction ahead of time and make sure it shows you to be firm and confident.
- Don't be nervous; use the time to speak positively and enthusiastically about your interests and yourself.
- Project a good attitude, speak clearly, smile, and maintain good body posture and eye contact.
- When you are asked a question, it's fine to take a moment to think about your answer before you reply. Speak honestly and be frank. Elaborate--don't give just yes-or-no answers.
- Discuss any special circumstances: explain the grade drop in your sophomore year, your challenge with languages or a particular course, your learning difference. This is your last chance!
- It is fine to ask questions, but make certain that they are educated and relevant questions.
- At the end of the interview, be sure to thank the interviewer for his or her time, verify your interest in the college, and shake hands.
- After the interview, send a thank-you note to the interviewer.

Here are some sample questions from college admissions interviews. Prepare answers to some as an exercise before your interview, and make sure you go into detail, not just one or two words. Don't skip the hard ones, as they will give you the most practice.

- How would you describe yourself as a person?
- How do you spend your free time? How have you spent your summers?
- What do you think of the latest news headlines?
- Tell me about your family.
- Have you assumed any leadership roles outside of school? How have these roles helped you develop as a person?
- What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life, so far? Who has influenced you the most?
- What historical figure do you most admire? Why?
- What books or authors have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking?
- Have you read deeply into any one author or subject area? Name the author, book, and area of interest.
- How do you like St. Anselm's? What has been the most positive experience you have had? The least positive experience? What would you like to change about St. Anselm's? What would you have done differently in your St. Anselm's career, and why?
- What leadership roles have you assumed in school, and how have these roles helped you to develop as a person?
- What would your teachers say about you? What would your peers say about you?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
- Tell me about your community service.
- What has been your favorite subject in high school, and why? Tell me about a particular class or assignment in which you found yourself most stimulated intellectually?
- Does your high school record accurately reflect your effort and ability?

- What subject did you find most challenging?
- What are your greatest strengths ... weaknesses?
- What are you looking for in a college? What exactly made you interested in attending this college?
- What can I tell you about the college?
- What might you study in college? Why?
- What do you plan to do outside the classroom?
- What are some of your personal or career goals for the future?

Making the Final Decision

Notices of admission begin to be received as early as mid-December. Most colleges notify students in late February to early April. These months can be a stressful time as students anticipate admissions decisions. After a student has experienced the thrill of acceptance, and possibly the disappointment of being wait-listed or rejected, he has to decide which college or university to attend.

If you are having difficulty selecting your college from among your available options, make a list of pros and cons for each school, including academic program, location, size, social opportunities, and financial aid package. Discuss your list with your parents, teachers, counselors, and friends. Visit the best colleges, from your perspective, on your list. Then, trust your instincts.

If you have been wait-listed and plan to stay on it for possible future acceptance, follow the directions in your wait-list letter. You may need to contact the admissions office, send in a reply card, or complete a website link. You might want to send an additional letter from a teacher, coach, or activities moderator, or update the admissions office about some new, important achievement. Be sure to let your St. Anselm's college counselor know your intentions regarding the wait-list, because he will want to discuss the opportunity with you and contact the college on your behalf.

Denial of admission to a favorite college can be a painful experience. Colleges have to reject many qualified candidates because of the limited number of spaces available in the freshman class. Sometimes, a student may write a letter of appeal. However, as one admissions officer conceded, "A letter of rejection is a rejection, is a rejection." If you have been denied admission, contact your St. Anselm's college counselor. He may be able to find out why you were not accepted, although some colleges will share this information and others will not. The important thing to do is to look forward and to focus on all of the other options you have.

Once you have chosen your college, you should email or write the other schools that offered you admission to inform them that you will not attend in the fall. Be sure to thank them for their interest in you and the attention they gave you during the application, campus visit, and interview processes.

Remember, you must send in a deposit to hold your place in the freshman class by **May 1 – the National Candidates' Reply Date. You can only secure your place with a deposit at ONE college.** If you are informed later that you have been taken off a wait-list and been offered admission, you may accept and send a deposit to that college, but you will forfeit your original deposit at the other college.

Before graduating from St. Anselm's, you will be asked to complete the [Form VI Evaluation Form](#) on which you will record your college admissions results. We will use this information for our school profile, to counsel rising seniors, for marketing, and for recruiting college admission representatives. St. Anselm's will never publish student names with the admissions information. Students are also invited to schedule an exit interview to discuss their experience during the college admissions process. This interview will assist the College Counseling Office as it evaluates its services to the school community.