

# DE COLLEGIO

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## **SUMMER DAYS, DRIFTIN' AWAY...**

Two months down, one to go before you embark upon your final, exciting year at Solebury. I'm sure that most of you have filled your summer days with classes, jobs, travel or volunteering. Now you're probably looking back and wondering where summer break went, and you may even be trying to figure out how you're going to get all of your summer reading done before school starts!

But what else should you be doing before school starts? As far as college is concerned, there is plenty. Here are some things that would be best for you to do before the craziness of classes and fall activities starts up:

- 1) Make initial visits to colleges. While ultimately it will be best to visit colleges when they are in session, visiting colleges when you have time over the summer will help you to narrow down your list so that you have a manageable (i.e. single digit) number of applications in the fall.
- 2) Get your hands on college applications. Colleges usually have applications available in early August. **The updated Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)) is now available!** If you can start filling them out over the summer, that's less work during the school year!
- 3) Write your essays. A carefully crafted essay takes time and focus to prepare. By writing your essay over the summer, this gives you the chance to put much thought into what you want to say. It also allows you to ask people (e.g. me!) to read your essay and have time to provide feedback. I have already critiqued essays for most of

you and can also look over your applications. In my insanity I actually hope to work on many, many more.

4) Meet with me. Some of you have been very good about setting up appointments. Some of you have been e-mailing me if you are not in the area. And since our college guidance classes concluded in March, I am pleased to have met individually at least once with all of you. We will need a short (20-minute) follow-up meeting at the start of the school year to talk about your summer and where you are in the college search. As I said in my last newsletter, this is a great way to help me help you to the fullest capacity!

5) Ask teachers if they would be willing to write recommendations for you. Ideally, this should have been done before you left school for the summer. But if you have not done so, I would suggest that you do so sooner rather than later. The beginning of the school year is crazy for teachers, too, so it's best to ask them before they have 3000 things on their mind!

## **MAY I RECOMMEND...?**

What is the best way to ask for a letter of recommendation? How can you help your teachers in preparing the best possible recommendation letter for you? If you follow these simple steps, it will be much easier for the teacher to write on your behalf:

1. Request recommendations as soon as possible. As noted above, you should have asked teachers if they will write a recommendation *before* the end of junior year. Follow up with an official request

through the "Colleges I'm Applying To" page of Naviance.

2. Ask teachers whom you think will know you well enough and have seen enough of your positive attributes to write a quality recommendation. You should also consider what major you are interested in when asking for a recommendation. For example, if you are interested in a science major, it would be wise to ask a science teacher for a recommendation. The teacher should have had you in class in high school. Keep in mind, too, that if a teacher does not feel that they know you well enough to write a quality letter of recommendation, they are under no obligation to write one for you.

3. While any forms to be filled out will be provided electronically through Naviance, you should provide all teachers with all relevant information regarding your experience in class/extracurricular activities, as requested. This could include your activities resume and a copy of your transcript.

4. All recommendations will be sent by the college counseling office directly to the college/university to which you are applying. Most will be sent electronically, but those that must be mailed will still be printed and sent through the college guidance office in one packet along with any forms, profiles and transcripts.

Naturally I will be writing a recommendation for you as well. In fact, I have already gathered notes and put together preliminary outlines for recommendations for all of the seniors, and have started the process of crafting individualized letters for each of you. I look forward to finishing all of what I believe will be quality recommendations soon.

Teachers may or may not choose to show you their recommendation, but they are under no obligation to do so. I do not show my recommendation to any students as there is an expectation of confidentiality

between the counseling office and the admissions office.

### **THE QUESTIONNAIRE TRUANCY**

In the June issue of *De Collegio*, I put out an APB for any questionnaires that were still missing. I have not received any more since, and there are still a few that are missing. These forms help you to really think about yourself: your talents, your interests, your goals, your personality, etc. While such a form is difficult to fill out, it is invaluable not only to me but also to you in the college search process. In thinking about yourself, you will be better prepared to fill out your college applications and write your essays. And, of course, it will help me to guide you and write your letter of recommendation.

### **THIS IS ONLY A TEST...**

Before you know it, it will be time to take those dreaded standardized tests again. Just when you had taken so long to forget about them...

The upcoming registration deadlines are as follows:

**Aug. 10:** Deadline to register for the September 8 ACT. Transportation for boarders will be to Council Rock High School North (Newtown, PA) *only*.

**Sept. 7:** Registration Deadline for October 6 SAT. Solebury will provide transportation for boarders to Central Bucks East High School in Doylestown, PA *only*.)

Any student wishing to test at another testing center *must provide their own transportation*.

There will be more tests and more registration deadlines in the fall. These will be outlined in future editions of *De Collegio*.

## **BE PREPARED**

In an effort to better serve our college-bound students, Solebury School is again offering evening SAT/ACT prep classes taught by our own faculty. Because our teachers know our students, we feel that they are in an ideal position to tailor these courses and their teaching style to your needs.

We are offering a content-based, individually structured course leading into the October SAT and ACT. This is designed for seniors who wish to focus on the specific content on which they want extra help. This could be just math, just reading, just writing or any combination therein.

For more information, please contact Hanna or Britta.

## **COLLEGE VISITS, THE INTRODUCTION**

Over the course of the fall, several colleges will visit Solebury to speak with our juniors and seniors. Generally the bulk of the visit requests happen in August, so while we already have 27 college visits confirmed, I expect that number to increase rapidly in the coming weeks. Future issues of *De Collegio* will include college visits in those months, and they will be posted in Naviance as well.

## **COLLEGE VISITS, STEP ONE: HOW TO SIGN UP FOR MEETINGS WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES**

When meeting with college representatives on our campus, there is a proper procedure that you must follow:

1. **Check on the College Visits page of Naviance.** I will post a list of visiting colleges – which I will update frequently – there. I will also send weekly college visit reminders. If a college is on your Naviance list, you should also get a reminder e-mail.

2. **Sign up for college visits on Naviance** a minimum of three days before the scheduled visit. To do so, click on the Colleges tab, then “View All Upcoming Visits.”
3. Because of the schedule, some of the visits may overlap multiple classes. You will need to get permission from the teachers of every class that you miss part of.
4. You *may not* miss a test or a quiz to attend a college visit. It is up to the discretion of the teacher to permit you to miss class. If you do not obtain permission, I will support the decision of the teacher.
5. If I feel that you are taking advantage of the opportunity to meet with college representatives in an effort to miss class, I will ask you to return to class.
6. All college visits, unless otherwise notified, will be in the conference room in the Carriage House. Be prepared to have your pass checked at the beginning of the meeting.

*College visits are informational only. If you cannot meet with a visiting college, it will not jeopardize your chances of gaining admission to that school.*

## **COLLEGE VISITS, STEP TWO: WHAT TO DO AT COLLEGE MEETINGS**

While informational in nature, college visits allow a representative to gain a feel for the type of student a high school produces. They also allow you to make an impression on the representative. *REMEMBER ... the person you meet in the visit may be the first person reading your application.* Help them leave with a favorable impression of you and Solebury School!

It would, therefore, be in your and Solebury’s best interest to:

1. Arrive promptly.
2. Introduce yourself, if asked.
3. Pay attention.

4. Behave properly.
5. Ask serious, well-thought questions.
6. Be articulate.
7. Thank the representative.

**After the visit, return promptly to your next class.** Failure to do so may result in the revoking of the privilege to meet with college representatives visiting Solebury in the future.

I look forward to your successful contact with the college representatives!

### **COLLEGE MEETINGS OFF-CAMPUS**

Over the course of the year, colleges will contact Solebury about information sessions they will hold in the area at hotels or other sites within an hour of campus. These are sessions that colleges may hold in addition to or in place of a visit to our campus. Students are welcome to attend these on their own; it may be easier than travelling to the college to get information. When I am informed of such presentations, I plan to post them in future issues of *De Collegio* and online.

### **RESOURCES**

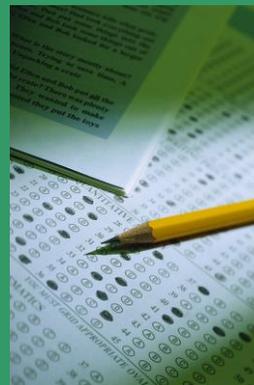
The College Guidance Office has several resources available for you. Among the many guidebooks that you may borrow are the Fiske Guide to Colleges, Barron's Profiles of American Colleges, Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges, Cool Colleges,

Choosing the Right College and more! Feel free to stop on by any time to take advantage of what we have to offer.

### **THE LAST WORD**

In senior year, you may find that the window is there for more stress than you have ever experienced. In addition to more challenging courses and higher expectations with your activities, you will be thinking about graduation, senior projects and college. For some of you, college means being away from home for the first time. Are you going to open the window and let all the stress in, or are you going to keep that window shut by working with those people who are here to help you and taking advantage of this period of lesser stress and getting ahead on your college applications? Choose wisely!

*Tim Gallen*



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[www.solebury.org/academics/college-counseling/index.aspx](http://www.solebury.org/academics/college-counseling/index.aspx)

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