

- 1. **Refine your college list** to **ten** institutions, balanced in selectivity. By balanced we mean that there should not be more than three colleges in the “Reach” category (>15% chance of acceptance), and making sure you have at least three colleges in both the “Possible” (a 60 / 40 chance of acceptance) and “Likely” (70% chance of acceptance) categories. These categories differ from student to student and are based on personal grade averages and test scores, as well as college acceptance rates.
- 2. **Visit Colleges:** Demonstrating your interest could be a significant part of your process for certain colleges. This means visiting, registering with an admission office, and following up with thank you notes or emails. The most selective colleges (“Reach”) care far less about visits; small, liberal arts universities which take 40-50% of a class early decision highly value the visits!
- 3. **Know testing requirements** for colleges on your list.
- 4. After July 1, **register** for fall SATs at www.collegeboard.com or ACTs at www.actstudent.org
- 5. After August 1st open an account on **The Common Application** at <https://www.commonapp.org>
 - 5a. Complete the Profile and Family sections of Common Application.
 - 5b. Draft at least one Common Application essay from the choices available.
 - 5c. Try drafting a “Why _____?” statement—“Why do I want to apply to... (Fill in the blank with a college name, such as “Washington University St. Louis?” Why is it a good match for me?”
- 6. If you need **financial aid**, know what each college requires—FAFSA, CSS Profile or college-specific form. Check out the “financial aid” sections on colleges’ web sites. Use the financial calculators, or look for particular Merit Scholarship application processes.
- 7. Register with the **NCAA** (if there is **any** chance you will compete at the Division 1 or 2 level). <http://web1.ncaa.org>
- 8. **Return to SSA** for our “Senior Bootcamp” meetings on either **Tuesday, August 25th** or **Monday, August 31st from 1-2:30 pm** with all of these tasks completed, including essay drafts in hand!

Some other things you *could* do:

- A. Look at university or college specific **SUPPLEMENTAL essays** required by some of my colleges. Draft one or two essays, as these may be a deciding factor in an application!
- B. Log in to Naviance “Family Connection” at <http://connection.naviance.com/shadyside> and keep your college list up-to-date, do more college research, or make a “Resume.”

□ □ □ Feel free to email your college counselor at any time in case you have questions, want suggestions, or simply want to know what else you can do to help yourself in your college process!

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