

VENICE HIGH STUDENTS

College Planning 101
By Mrs. Joyner



Rotary Futures is here to help YOU!

- Our job is to help you apply to colleges, apply for financial aid, and find local scholarship opportunities. We also coordinate Bright Futures for our school and manage all community service hours.
- The more you come in, the better we get to know you...and the more we can help you! So please don't be a stranger!
- Open from 7:15AM to 3:30PM Tuesday through Friday (not in summer). Appointments are no longer required!
- Open on Tuesday, August 3rd (week before school) for PART-TIME hours
- Like our Facebook and Instagram Pages for more updates! 😊
- Join the Junior REMIND group if you haven't already done so. I will send important reminders about college information and deadlines, scholarship information, and college visits. It also gives us a way to text/communicate.

JOIN REMIND! Text 81010 to rf2022c

A Few Important Reminders...

- Take your SAT and ACT exams before you apply to college:
- SAT: June 5th and August 28th (1210 for FMS; 1330 for FAS).
- ACT: June 12th and July 17th ACT (25 for FMS; 29 for FAS).
- NEW! Check your Bright Futures Status on your Parent Portal (Transcript Tab).
- Complete your community service hours this summer (75 for FMS; 100 for FAS).
- Make sure your Senior schedule meets State University System admissions requirements (especially for Social Science). Check with your school counselor to be sure that your schedule has all necessary requirements.





The Pandemic's Impact on College Admission

- Many schools went test-optional (except for our public universities in Florida).
- This significantly increased the number of students applying to test-optional universities. Yale saw a 40% increase in their application load, which made it more challenging for many test-optional schools to make decisions.
- Schools suspended in-person tours and visits. Now, USF and FGCU are offering in-person tours by appointment. UF, UCF, and FSU offer self-guided tours, but keep checking!
- More college freshmen chose to take gap years, which impacted admissions statistics for this year's seniors.

What Are Colleges REALLY Looking For?

- Admissions officers are VERY interested in the individual who will IMPACT their campus and is genuinely interested in their school.
- Admissions committees spend an average of 8-12 minutes reviewing an applicant's application.
- They want kids who take the lead and are running the show with their applications. YOU should be the one arranging interviews, visits, reaching out to admissions officers with questions, and doing the talking during a visit instead of your parents. It's refreshing for them to see this because it's rare these days.
- What matters most to them? NOT test scores, but courses taken, your overall academic success, and your impact in your own community.
- What have you done to show colleges that you have pursued your intended field or your passions?
Do your activities/volunteer work/course work align with your end goal?



Helpful Resources About College Admission



Podcasts:

- [College Admissions Decoded by NACAC \(National Association for College Admissions Counselors\)](#)
- [Inside the Yale Admissions Office](#)
- [This American Life, Episode 734: The College Tour Has Been Cancelled](#)

Books:

- [Who Gets In And Why: A Year Inside College Admissions](#) by Jeffrey Selingo
- [How To Be A High School Superstar: A Plan to Get Into College By Standing Out Without Burning Out](#) by Cal Newport
- [The Truth About College Admissions: A Family Guide](#) by Brennan Barnard
- [50 Successful Ivy League Application Essays](#) by Gen and Kelly Tanabe



Summer MUST-DO List

PLAN TO COMPLETE THESE STEPS
BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS IN AUGUST.

#1: How Will You Pay For College?

- Have an open conversation with your parents. How much are they willing contribute?
- Are you hoping for Bright Futures?
- Do you have Florida Prepaid?
- Will you need financial aid or scholarships to make college a reality?
- Look at the total cost of attendance for each college on your target list. This should factor into your decision: Are you willing to go into debt? Remember that not all schools are as generous with financial assistance.



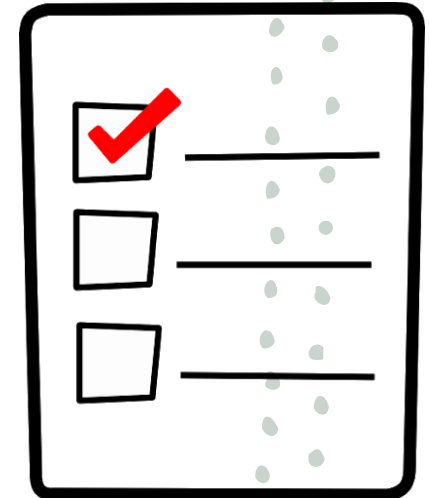
#2: Narrow And Solidify Your Target List of Colleges



- Ideal Number: 5-7 Schools that you would truly LOVE to attend. Each application can cost \$40-80 each!
- As yourself WHY that college. Research specific programs. Communicate with the college. Visit the school virtually or in person. Don't judge a school until you've done your due diligence!
- Don't waste time (and money!) applying to schools that don't really interest you. There should be a logical reason why each school is on your target list.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions to the admissions counselors at the universities. Open any emails you get from your target colleges; they track who opens their emails to see who is really interested!

#2 Continued...Making Your Target List

- Look at the accepted student data for your target schools. Do you fall within their parameters for admission? This doesn't guarantee admission!
- Make sure your list isn't only comprised of reach schools (all Ivy League and elite colleges should count as reach schools).
- There are MULTIPLE colleges where you will find sustaining happiness and fulfillment. Try to avoid getting your heart set on one school.
- Can you financially make this school a reality?
- If you are on free & reduced lunch at VHS, let me know; you could qualify for application fee waivers AND SAT/ACT fee waivers!



#3: Begin the Common Application



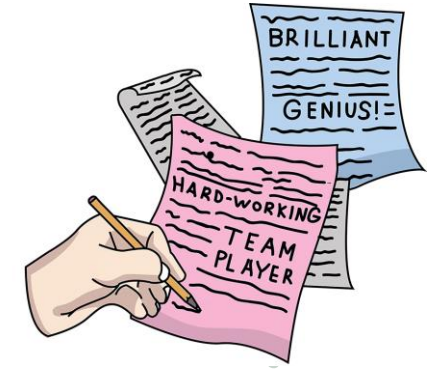
- Create your Common App account. Over 900 colleges use the Common App, including most of our major state universities.
- **After August 1st**, add specific colleges to your Dashboard and make note of deadlines.
- Complete the General App components, which requires you to fill in your personal information, academic history, and extracurriculars. You can do this before August 1st!
- Some state universities have their own application and also use the Common App. One application is not preferred over another at the state universities.

#4: Extracurricular Activities



- Colleges want to see that your extracurricular activities align with your passions and ultimate goals over padding your resume with endless surface activities.
- The Common Application gives you ten spaces to list your activities/sports/jobs/community service. Don't feel like you need to fill out all ten spaces! Colleges would rather read about specifically what you learned and how you grew from fewer overall experiences.
- Ask yourself: will this organization/employer miss me when I am gone? When you answer yes, THOSE are the activities worth listing!

#5: Recommendation Letters



- Check each college website to see if they require letters of recommendation. Most public universities in Florida do NOT require rec letters. However, most private colleges in Florida & out-of-state colleges DO require them!
- You will need recommendation letters for many scholarship applications.
- Consider asking two academic teachers from high school and two community references—coaches, club advisors, or people who have seen you serve others. Give them at least two weeks to write your letter, and consider giving them a resume when you ask.
- Ask your recommenders to send you a PDF copy of your letter if they are willing so you can easily use them for scholarship season.
- Don't always choose the teacher who gave you straight A's; a recommendation from a teacher who watched a student struggle can show how you respond to a challenge.

#6: Begin Drafting your Essay(s)



- Google Common App essay topics for 2021-22. There is a new prompt about gratitude; check out each option and see which prompts appeal to you!
- For students on the bubble, extra effort on the essay can tilt the admissions odds in their favor!
- For your essay, think about how you can express your interests and who you are in a tangible way.
- Everyone has a unique narrative and an authentic voice; it is up to YOU to go deep and find it. Colleges are desperate to learn who you are and what you value. Don't try to be someone you are not.
- Tell a story in a conversational way. Pretend you are chatting with the admissions counselor. Avoid being too stiff or formal.
- Many students share about similar experiences; it's what you MAKE of these experiences—what you learned from them and how they impacted who you have become—that makes your essay stand out.
- For supplemental essays, show the colleges that you've done your research about their school. This is your chance to convince them that you will take advantage of the academic and extracurricular activities on their campus!
- I will lead some additional college essay workshops once school resumes! 😊

#7: Use Your Calendar To Set Goals



- Add each college's due date to your calendar, and set target "finish" dates on a calendar for each application.
- **Early September**: Questbridge applications due (for high-achieving, low-income students...please see me if you are on free & reduced lunch lists!)
- **October 1st**: FAFSA opens (this is how you apply for financial aid) and Bright Futures Application Opens
- **October**: Come to Rotary Futures to fill out our scholarship database AND aim to have your SAT/ACT testing complete
- **Mid-October to Mid-November**: Early Decision/Early Action deadlines

Remember...You're Not Alone in This!

- Come visit us at Rotary Futures whenever you have a question about your applications/scholarships or need help. That is why we are here!
- Keep in mind that you can find happiness at more than one school. Try to avoid getting your heart set on just one place!
- My email is Caitlin.Joyner@sarasotacountyschools.net. I will be checking my account often over the summer, so please let me know if I can help you!
- This process and journey can be overwhelming, but we are all in this together. It is a time for you to self-reflect and learn about who you are AND who you hope to become. It's an exciting time!

