



Benedictine Academy

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Dear Student:

The Post-Secondary Planning process in conjunction with the College Application process can be overwhelming. Sister Donna Jo has designed this guide to make this process as easy as possible.

This valuable resource provides detailed information on Post-Secondary Planning, Professional Technical Opportunities, Military Options, and the Workforce. The appendices in the back of the handbook consist of the College Application Procedure and Checklist, Request for College Recommendation Letter, Student Self Evaluation, Parent Questionnaire, Recommendation Form, Release of Records Request Form, and sample letters for student use.

We consider this a joint venture. In addition, the Guidance Office has a wealth of information related to college information, scholarships, financial aid, the military, specialty schools, apprenticeship programs, jobs, and other important reference materials. I encourage you and your parent, to make an appointment so you can utilize all the resources in Guidacne.

The Post-Secondary Planning Guide is available electronically on the BA website under the “HS Guidance” link. I wish you a successful senior year and the very best in your future endeavors!

Sincerely,
Ms. Patricia W. Moseley
Guidance Office

HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

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Benedictine Academy

Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges

**POST-SECONDARY
SCHOOL
PLANNING GUIDE**

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POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL PLANNING AT BENEDICTINE ACADEMY: LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

This handbook guides you to your college and career planning. It outlines Benedictine Academy's process for helping you assess your goals, abilities, and interests.

This handbook concentrates on the details of their search, application and decision-making process.

Prepare for this program by taking the standardized tests and by assessing your goals and aspirations. Talk with your family, your school counselor to identify your interests. What do you want to study? Where in the country—in the world—do you want to be? What careers intrigue you? What must you do to attain your goals?

You will be presented guidelines and information, provided facilities and materials for you to use, and offered professional insights to college and career issues. The department's homepage located on the Benedictine Academy website supplements this information.

www.benedictineacad.org

You will also want to check out significant software, print matter, and relevant internet sites. In the guidance office, several helpful resource materials are also available to you.

If you use all the resources available to help you prepare for life beyond BA, the steps to your future will be easier to take.

The Importance of the High School Curriculum

Your high school curriculum is crucial to you as you focus on finding the best match in a college. A strong and challenging curriculum is also important to college admission departments when they evaluate candidates.

At most of the four-year accredited colleges in the country, the difficulty of being admitted is governed by a single principle of supply and demand. If a college has a large number of applications, but only has to accept a small number to fill the freshman class, the college can be highly selective. Conversely, if the college must take most of its applicants to fill the spaces available, the institution cannot be very selective.

College selectivity is not directly correlated to the college's academic integrity. A college's selectivity may not be important to you when you make your choice. The best college for you matches your desires, goals, objectives, abilities, and development.

Your high school curriculum is crucial as you focus on finding the best match in a college. It is also key to college admissions departments when they evaluate candidates. Criteria for college admissions varies greatly, however, all colleges focus on the rigor and quality of your high school curriculum.

Admission personnel judge "rigor" and "quality" by evaluating the importance of the academic subject matter in your courses, the grades you earn in those courses, the level of difficulty of your courses, and the rank in class that results from the grades you have achieved and the program you have taken.

Generally, colleges now prefer a traditional and classical college preparatory curriculum that includes the following areas:

- English (literature and composition courses)
- Mathematics (general level courses may not be acceptable; computer science is not generally accepted as math, but it may be recognized as a significant curricular component)
- Science (laboratory courses)
- Social Studies
- Foreign Language

Take as rigorous and personally challenging a program as you can. Fit your course selection to your interests and goals. Draw upon the information gained from your self-assessment, your earlier performances, and from standardized testing to determine the best program for you.

All colleges also look favorably on enrichment courses when they supplement a strong academic program. Performing arts, business, home economics and technical/applied arts all provide important electives for students who wish to enhance their course of study.

Different types of institutions of higher education have general requirements unique to their classification. Useful classifications include public universities, private four-year colleges, highly selective colleges, two-year colleges, and community colleges. The more selective a college, the more that college can demand in academic achievement.

Minimum course requirements for entrance into four different types of colleges are shown in the following list. **Use the academic prerequisites only as general minimum guidelines.** Many colleges look for candidates who take the most rigorous program and achieve successfully.

Because college expectations may change from year-to-year, obtain specific information directly from the college or from your counselor.

Course Requirements for Admission—Types of Colleges

Public Universities

English----- 4 years
Social Studies----- 4 years
Mathematics----- 3-4 years*
Science----- 3 years
Foreign Language---- 2-3 years
Physical Education--- 2 years
Academic Electives-- 2 years

Private 4-Year Colleges

English----- 4 years
Social Studies----- 4 years
Mathematics----- 3-4 years*
Science----- 3 years
Foreign Language---- 2-3 years
Physical Education--- 2 years
Academic Electives-- 2 years

Highly Selective Colleges

English----- 4 years
Social Studies----- 4 years
Mathematics----- 4 years*
Lab Science-----4 years
Foreign Languages----4 years*
Physical Education---2 years
Academic Electives---2 years

Community Colleges

Requirements vary greatly from an open-door admission policy to selective admission for particular courses as specified by the different departments.

*High school courses taken in grades seven and eight: for example, Algebra I, geometry, and the first year of any foreign language are counted in this total (except for NCAA eligibility).

Post-Secondary Options

More than half of all recent high school graduates in the United States pursue some type of postsecondary education. In many other countries, a smaller percentage of students go on for more schooling after high school. However, in America, recent surveys show that most parents want their children to get some college education. There is a wide range of higher education options in the United States. For this reason, your child is likely to find a college or program that is well suited to your needs.

There are many post-secondary opportunities for students graduating from high school:

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Students who wish to pursue a general academic program usually choose a four-year college or university. Such a program lays the foundation for more advanced studies and professional work. Four-year colleges and universities offer bachelor's degrees (B.A. and B.S.) in most areas in the arts and sciences, such as English literature, foreign languages, history, economics, political science, biology, zoology, chemistry, and in many other fields.

Here are the main differences between four-year colleges and universities.

Four-Year Colleges: These are post-secondary schools that provide four-year educational programs in the arts and sciences. These colleges confer bachelor's degrees.

Universities: These are post-secondary schools that include at least a college of arts and/or sciences, one or more programs of graduate studies, and one or more professional schools. Universities confer bachelor's degrees and graduate and professional degrees.

When a student earns a bachelor's degree it means that he or she has passed examinations in a broad range of courses and has studied one or two subject areas in greater depth. (These one or two subject areas are called a student's "major" area(s) of study or area(s) of "concentration.") A bachelor's degree is usually required before a student can begin studying for a graduate degree. A graduate degree is usually earned through two or more years of advanced studies beyond four years of college. This might be a master's or a doctoral degree in a particular field or a specialized degree required in certain professions such as law, social work, architecture, or medicine.

Community Colleges

When you enroll at a community college, you may choose to earn an Associate Degree and transfer after your first two years to a four-year institution, or you may choose a career program designed to prepare you for a job when you graduate. More than 1,200 courses of study are available including, engineering, computer science, pre-law, pre-med, nursing, marketing, psychology, law enforcement, filmmaking, business management, economics, and fine arts.

There are several resource manuals in the guidance office. The programs often lead to a license, a certificate, an associate of arts (A.A.), an associate of science (A.S.), or an associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree. The programs at the community colleges that lead to an A.S. or A.A. are usually in academic areas and are often comparable to the first two years of a general academic program offered by a four-year college or university. In many cases, two-year degrees can be transferred to four-year schools and credited toward a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree.

Many community colleges offer technical/occupational training, as well as academic courses. For example, many cardiovascular technicians, medical laboratory technicians, and computer technicians received their education and training at community colleges and/or technical colleges.

Many community and technical colleges offer technical programs in cooperation with local businesses, industry, public service agencies, or other organizations. Some of these programs are formally connected to education programs that students start in high school; they are often referred to as "tech-prep" or "school-to-career" programs. (Footnote: These "school-to-career" or "tech-prep" programs often provide students with an opportunity to learn new skills by working for a local employer and by taking high school courses that link with courses offered at local colleges.)

Two-year colleges such as community colleges often operate under an “open admissions” policy that can vary from school to school. At some institutions, “open admissions” means that anyone who has a high school diploma or GED certificate can enroll. At other schools, anyone over 18 years of age can enroll or, in some cases, anyone deemed able to benefit from the programs at the school can enroll.

Application requirements at colleges with two-year programs and shorter programs may include a high school transcript – a list of all the courses the student took and grades earned in four years of high school – and college entrance examination scores as well. Some schools have programs that allow “open admissions,” while other programs in the same school – particularly in scientific or technical subjects – may have further admission requirements. Since requirements vary widely, it is important to check into schools and programs individually.

New Jersey’s community colleges have **transfer agreements** in place with four-year colleges and universities – both public and private – in New Jersey. Those students guaranteed admission must meet certain requirements – such as minimum grade point average – that vary among the four-year colleges. These agreements provide uniform access to our four-year partners for students from all of New Jersey’s community colleges.

Technical Schools

A number of privately owned schools provide technical training. Areas of specialization include broadcasting, fashion, cosmetology, medical and technical training, and many more. When choosing a private school, carefully check the school’s credentials. Read about the school in brochures available in the Guidance office or online. Be sure that the school is licensed. Visit the school to check its facilities and equipment. You can also investigate the program quality and the school’s financial stability by contacting graduates of the school and their employers, the Better Business Bureau, and the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Armed Services

Opportunities in education and training are available for men and women in all branches of the Armed forces. In peacetime, one of the major functions of the armed services is training. All branches of the services now prefer to take high school graduates for specialized training. Training in the armed services can range from a few weeks to a year depending on the field of specialization. Some of the training is related to military service, but much of it is applicable to jobs in civilian life.

Apprenticeship Training (On-the-Job Training by Business and Industry)

The amount of money spent by business and industry in training and educating employees exceeds that spent by all formal schools and colleges combined. At times the training lasts only a few days or a few weeks while some occupations might take a year with frequent retraining as the employee advances in the company. Companies will often finance all or part of the training for students who want to take job-related courses. As a result, increasing numbers of employees are working toward high school diplomas or college degrees with financial assistance from employers.

Workforce

Some students choose to go directly into the workforce after high school. There are many reasons as to why they may select this path: financial; personal; or undecided regarding future goals.

Taking Time Out

Some students and their parents want to explore organized opportunities for personal growth and experience during an interim semester or year. Exciting and valuable programs are now well established in the United States. They range widely in type and location and may include the following:

- Internships in community social service;
- Leadership training, outdoor education;
- Post graduate year at preparatory school;
- Structured travel/education.

THE QUESTIONS: WHAT'S NEXT?

Life is full of decisions. Some are relatively easy to make, such as what to wear or what movies to see; but making decisions about your future can be confusing. It is difficult to know where to start because there are many things to think about.

While considering your next step, the following seven-step Decision-Making Model gives you structure, while processing and identifying the necessary information.

Decision-Making Model

Step One: Identify the Decision to be Made

Before you begin gathering information, it is important that you have a clear understanding of what it is you are trying to decide. Think about what you want to achieve and state that as your goal. Some decisions you might be facing could include:

1. What do I want to do after graduation?
2. What will I do to prepare for the next phase of my life?
3. What are my short-term and long-term goals?
4. Where do I want to be in five years and what is the best way to get there?

Step Two: Know Yourself (Self-Assessment)

Before you begin exploring careers and trying to identify jobs and careers which will prove satisfying, you must first get a sense of what makes you - your skills, interests, values, and personality characteristics. Your journey of self-knowledge will never end, but to get started, use an interest inventory and other assessments available on **Family Connection (My Personality Type, My Learning Style)** . **Questions you may want to ask yourself are:**

Skills:

1. What can I do best?
2. What are my strengths and weaknesses?
3. What are my most prominent skills and abilities?
4. What skills do I want to use on the job?
5. What skill do I need to acquire?

Interests:

1. What am I interested in doing?
2. What activities have I enjoyed the most?
3. With what kinds of people would I like to go to school/work?
4. What kind of school/job settings would I enjoy?

Values:

1. What satisfactions do I seek in a career?
2. In what ways must I be challenged and rewarded on the job?
3. In what type of school/work environments would I be happy?

Personality:

1. What personal qualities do I possess that will help me on the job?
2. How will my personal style influence my career choice?
3. How will I get along with my supervisor? Co-workers?

Dream: (Dream BIG. Your crazy idea might not be so crazy.)

1. If I could do anything, what would my life look like?
2. What do I feel passionate about?
3. What would your best workday look like 10 years from now?
4. What makes you feel energized or connected?

Step Three: Identify Options

1. Post-Secondary Education
2. Military
3. Workforce
4. Apprenticeships and Internships
5. Self-employment and Entrepreneurship
6. Other

Step Four: Gather Information and Data

1. Examine the information and resources available to you.
2. Visit your counselor, Guidance Office, library, and the Internet.
3. Network – take advantage of all networking opportunities with peers, recent graduates, parents, staff, college and military reps, business contacts, and community members.
4. Identify what additional information and resources you will need.
5. Seek out and utilize new information.
6. Use the Family Connection website for academic and career planning. Access Family Connection through your account.
7. Seek out learning through experience opportunities (volunteer, job shadow, etc.).

Step Five: Evaluate Options That Will Identify Your Best Post High School Plans

If you have completed your research, you are ready to evaluate each of the options you have identified:

1. Identify the pros and cons of each alternative.
2. Identify the values and needs that are satisfied by each.
3. Identify the risks involved with each alternative.
4. Project the probable future consequences of selecting each.

Ask yourself:

1. Will I feel good about this choice? How will my parents feel about it?
2. Will certain risks be involved? Am I willing to take such risks?
3. Will it be satisfying for me? How will I feel about this choice five years from now?

Step Six: Select One of the Options

Based on the information you have gathered and analyzed, you should be able to choose one of the options. Do you have enough information to choose one option over another? If not you might need to do more research. Consult with your parents, counselor, school staff, experts in your field of interest, or other community members. Don't forget to talk with graduates who have just experienced a similar option.

Step Seven: Design a Course of Action to Implement the Decision

Having chosen one of the options, you can now begin developing and implementing a plan of action. Confirm that the following have been evaluated:

1. What information or resources are needed to complete each step?
2. What are the obstacles to implementing my decision and how can I overcome them?
3. Identify steps to implement the decision.
4. Identify when to begin and end each step.
5. Take time to review your course of action and/or change direction if necessary.

Remember, not very many courses of action or career pathways are direct. Sometimes it is in the process that we learn what the next step needs to be.

Decision-making is a lifelong skill, so know you will have a lot of opportunities to practice this important process. The more you are willing to contribute to the process and to be open to the variety of resources and people available to you, the more likely it is you will meet with success! A little luck helps, too!

CREATE AN ACADEMIC RESUME

An academic resume is a summary of your educational experience and should highlight your scholastic honors, grade point average, standardized test scores, leadership positions and personal achievements. All extra-curricular activities, community service and relevant work **experience should be included on your one-page resume. See your Naviance Folder Family Connections.**

The objective of this resume is to give both faculty member(s) writing your recommendation and admission representatives reading your recommendation(s) a quick overview of your abilities, interests, and values. Developing an academic resume is an important first step in making educated college and career choices.

Organize your resume by listing all your contact information at the top of the page. This may include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and social security number. The high school name, address and phone number should follow your personal information under an "Education" heading. Add your graduation year, GPA, and test scores to this category. If you have received any academic honors, be sure to include these awards. Next, you will want to emphasize any leadership positions with your extra-curricular activities affiliated with school or other organizations. Use action verbs to describe your responsibilities as a leader. Include the number of years you have participated in these activities. Please list activities in chronological order.

Follow these tips to make your resume easier to read and scan into the database:

- Use 8-1/2" x 11" white or off-white paper.
- Use a font size of 10-14 points.
- Use non-decorative typefaces.
- Do not use vertical lines, graphics or shadings.
- Do not fold your resume.

See sample academic resume on the next page.

Academic Resume

John Doe John.Doe@yahoo.com
1234 Main Street SS# 000-00-0000
Burke, VA 22015 D.O.B. M/D/Y
(703) 555-5555

Personal Objective: Elementary School Teacher

Education: McLean High School, 1234 McLean Drive, McLean VA
Graduation 2008
GPA: 3.97
SAT: Verbal 680, Math 540, Writing 650
ACT: English 28, Math 22, Reading 27, SR 28, Composite 26

Academic Honors: Outstanding Science Project Certificate, 1998
McLean High School, McLean VA
National Council Teachers of English Writing Competition
Winner 2008

Extracurricular Activities: Varsity Wrestling Grades 9,10,11,12
Co-captain, led team to state championship.
Advanced Orchestra Grades 10, 11, 12
Violin
Peer Mediation Grades 9, 10
Facilitated mediations for peers in conflict.
Boy Scouts of America Grades 9,10,11,12
Eagle Scout

Volunteer Experience: Volunteer, Fair Oaks Hospital 2005 - present
Duties: provides reading material, reads aloud, visits with patients, and assists nurses.

Work Experience: Childcare, Faubian Elementary School 2004 - present
Duties: provides childcare during adult education parenting classes.

Related Skills: Holds CPR and basic emergency first aid certifications.
Trained in babysitting by Fairfax County Red Cross.
Skilled in computer programming and technology.

References available upon request

GUIDANCE OFFICE

The Guidance Office is a library media facility devoted to college and career exploration. It provides resources for students and parents to use there or to check out for home use.

You will find:

- Circulating library of post high school planning materials
- Commercially published guidebooks
- College catalogs
- Files on colleges, universities, and professional schools
- Computer programs and Internet sites to help you research colleges and careers
- DVD's of colleges and universities
- Testing information
- Current schedule of college visits
- Scholarships
- Financial Aid information
- Career exploration materials
- Career testing
- Armed Services information
- GED information
- Alternative Programs
- Preparatory schools
- Summer opportunities and educational travel
- Employment opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities

Family Connection

Family Connection allows students to:

- View your GPA and college admissions test scores
- Update your resume and post-secondary plans
- Research colleges by matching the acceptance history from each school, criteria, and admissions graphics

- View additional career and college counseling resources

Family Connection also allows counselors to share information with students about upcoming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other web resources for two- and four-year colleges, professional schools, and military and career information. Counselors and students will use e-mail to communicate through their Family Connection accounts. Follow your student on the path to lifelong learning, goal setting, and achievement. For additional questions about Family Connection, please contact your school counselor.

To log in, go to www.naviance.com/beneaca.

COLLEGE PLANNING

COLLEGE TERMINOLOGY

Application Deadline: The date by which applications, including transcripts and SAT or ACT scores are due at a college. Deadlines vary by college. Check each college for the deadline.

College: A school of higher learning, offering an academic degree; may be public or private and can be two-year or four-year.

College Calendar: The calendar explains the basic method used to divide the academic year (for instance: semester, trimester, quarter term) and lists all pertinent dates for beginning terms, holidays, vacations, exams, etc.

Common Application Form: A single application form which is accepted by more than 300 institutions. After completing the original application, you make copies and submit these copies (electronically or by mail) to each of the institutions to which you are applying that accept the Common Application. Participating colleges pledge to view this common application as equal to their own application.

Concentration: Usually referred to as a major, particular subject or area in which a student specializes. Usually most of the courses taken in the junior and senior year are in the major field.

Consortium: Several colleges and universities within close proximity of each other that allow students the opportunity to use the libraries or take classes at all member institutions. Consortium members often present joint lecture programs or unusual courses.

Deferred Admission: Deferred admission is a plan which permits a student, once accepted, to postpone matriculation for one year in order to pursue other plans.

Deferred Decision: The college or university determines that more information is needed to make a final decision about a candidate's application. Often the decision is delayed until seventh semester grades and/or new test scores are received.

Early Action: Early action is a plan that invites early application but does not require the student to attend if accepted. Application deadline is usually in early November through December. Preferred date may be in October. Students may apply to as many “EA” schools as they wish.

Early Decision: Early decision, a plan offered by a select number of colleges, allows a student to apply between October and mid-January (generally) for an early determination of admissibility. Strong academic students, who are sure where they want to go to college, may apply to their preferred school early. If accepted, the student is obligated to attend. The student may submit other applications during this period, but **only one** can be early decision. If accepted through the early decision program, the student must withdraw all other applications.

Freshman Profile: A document published by a college that includes a summary of the GPAs and SAT or ACT scores of the previous freshman class. It can give you a sense of where you stand in relation to other students.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The cumulative average of all your grades. The GPA is calculated at the end of each year and the seventh semester of your senior year.

Need-Blind: The philosophical position that a college accepts a student on the basis of his or her meeting specific requirements without regard to the student’s ability to pay. The understanding is that the school’s Financial Aid Office will assemble an appropriate package for that student.

Rolling Admissions: The College will notify the applicant as soon as the application has been processed (usually four to six weeks) and the file is complete. It is to the student’s advantage to apply early. (A complete file may include seventh semester grades.)

Semester System: Academic school calendar where the academic year is divided into two parts.

Transcript: The student’s academic record that is sent by the high school to the colleges where the student is applying. This includes courses taken, final grades, cumulative GPA, and work in progress (senior classes).

University: A school of higher learning containing more than one college and offering graduate programs.

Waitlist: A list maintained by selective schools containing names of students predicted to succeed at the institution but not accepted until those accepted outright decide whether or not they will attend. If space remains available, the school contacts students “waitlisted” generally between May 1 and August 1.

What Colleges Look For

College admissions officers are looking for well-rounded students who will be academically successful at their institutions. Since most colleges have more applicants than they have available space, they establish certain criteria for selection:

Academic Record

Other factors considered:

- GPA Sports Involvement
- Strength of the Program Special Talents
- Test Scores Legacy
- Activities Diversity
- Letters of Recommendation Summer Experience
- Interviews Internships
- Student Essay Music Involvement
- Community Service
- Leadership Positions and Awards
- Employment

While the criteria may be the same from school to school, their order of importance will vary. No single factor will determine acceptance or rejection. Some colleges may look only at grades and test scores. Most, however, are interested in more than just the academic record. They want to know about accomplishments, interests, and future goals. It is most important, however, to take challenging courses, work hard, and earn good grades.

College Planning Calendar

Junior Year:

Winter

- Talk to friends, parents, and faculty members about colleges and careers.
- Organize a file box of personal and institutional information on post-secondary school opportunities.
- Analyze your PSAT scores.
- Register carefully for senior courses. Take the most demanding program you can manage successfully.
- Talk to junior year teachers about college recommendations—choose your teachers carefully.

Spring/Summer

- Schedule and take the SAT/ACT.
- Research the prospective colleges on your list.
- Visit the colleges of interest during spring break.
- Develop an academic resume.
- Attend college information sessions.
- Attend a college fair.
- Take Advanced Placement exams.
- Schedule and take SAT subject tests if necessary.
- Student athletes should send official transcript to NCAA.

Senior Year:

September

- Pay attention to **all** deadlines.
- Make sure your SAT and/or ACT scores are sent to your colleges of choice. LBSS does **not** send the test scores. You **must** send your test scores yourself.
- Finalize your short list ... decide to what schools you will apply.
- Schedule your college appointment with your counselor.
- Know your college application deadlines.
- Know **deadlines** of turning in college information to counselor.
- Finalize your resume.
- Confirm with teachers writing recommendations. (Give teachers three weeks minimum to write recommendation.) Give them addressed and stamped envelopes with BA as the return address.
- Draft your college essays.

October

- Attend to early action or early decision deadlines.
- Arrange for on- and off-campus interviews, when offered.
- Attend New Jersey College Fairs.
- Finalize college essay.
- Apply to “rolling admission” institutions, as advised by your counselor.
- Submit all transcript requests to the Transcript Assistant three to four weeks prior to the college deadlines.

November

- Finalize transcript requests and college applications.
- Remind parents of financial aid meeting next month.

December

- Withdraw other applications if you receive binding early decision acceptance.
- Remember to inform counselor and/or transcript assistant of college acceptances, denials, deferred, etc.
- Remember to register for PIN number for student and parent at www.fafsa.ed.gov if you are applying for financial aid.

January

- Submit FAFSA directly to Federal Student Aid Programs as soon after January as possible, to be received no later than June 30. (Most colleges set earlier deadlines.)
- Send “thank you” notes to teachers/faculty who have written your recommendations.
- Research scholarship possibilities.

February

- Maintain a rigorous academic schedule and involvement in your eighth semester.
- Investigate thoroughly your choices by carefully considering major, costs, living arrangements, etc.
- Apply for scholarships.

April

- Receive college and university acceptances/denials/waitlist.
- Analyze options.
- Send deposit to your selected college or university and make necessary house arrangements.
- As soon as possible, inform all colleges that accept you whether you plan to attend or cancel; **final date to reply** is the National Candidate Reply Date, May 1.
- If you have been placed on a “waitlist” for a school (or schools) you would like to attend, accept the opportunity if you like, but be sure to accept and deposit at a college that accepted you.
- Notify your counselor of your decision.

May

- Reply on or before May 1st to report your intent to attend or to cancel.
- Take the Senior Survey.
- Take Advanced Placement exams; have scores sent to the college you have selected.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS

Most colleges and universities require candidates to submit scores from either the SAT or the ACT. Additionally some colleges may recommend or require you to take a number of SAT subject tests. Standardized testing is only part of all the information that represents you and your accomplishments. You should have taken the PSAT. It is a practice test and may provide useful information about your test-taking skills as well as practice in testing. If you plan to go to college, you should take the SAT and/or the ACT twice, once in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year. You may find that you score better on one type of test than the other. You will be permitted to select which results you send to colleges. Speak with your school counselor about the SAT subject tests and the AP exams.

Fee waivers are available for these tests for those students who qualify. See your counselor for details.

TYPES OF TESTS:

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

The PSAT/NMSQT is given in October to high school juniors nationwide. The PSAT is a useful indicator of scholastic aptitude as well as the basis of some merit scholarships. Administered by the College Board, the PSAT is the source of some college mailings that you may receive. Students receive three scores: verbal, math, and writing. The “Selection Index” (SI) is used exclusively for the National Merit competition.

ACT (American College Test)

These are four 35-60 minute tests in academic areas of English, mathematics, social studies, reading, and science reasoning. Students receive four separate scores plus a composite score. Each score is reported as the accurate portion from a total of 36. There is an optional writing assessment which is required by certain colleges. Check the ACT website (www.actstudent.org) or the college website to determine if you will need this section.

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) Reasoning Test

This three hour and 35 minute test, which is administered by the College Board, measures critical reading and mathematical reasoning, language usage and writing. Each of the three areas has a total possible point score of 800 and is reported as part of the top score of 2400. All scores are reported to the colleges that you request them to be sent to. Colleges then have the option of taking your best scores from all the tests you have taken or they may choose to select the best combination of scores taken at any one time. **It is their choice, not yours.**

SAT Subject Tests

These are one-hour tests measuring knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in specific subject areas. Students may register for up to three tests on one date. Some highly selective four-year colleges require three SAT subject tests.

The SAT subject tests are usually offered on the same days as the SAT, however, there are exceptions. Check carefully! Tests are given in American History, European History, Biology, Chemistry, English Literature, mathematics level I, mathematics level II, Physics, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. **You should take a specific SAT subject test as soon after completing the course as is possible.**

AP (Advanced Placement Tests)

These are high school examinations based on college level courses taken in high school. AP exams are administered by College Board once a year in May. The scores are primarily used for college placement, credit, or advanced standing. The most highly selective colleges may also consider AP scores as part of the admission decision.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

The TOEFL, administered by the College Board, provides an alternative test for students who have been speaking English for five years or less or whose first language is not English. The test is used to evaluate the English proficiency of these students. Highly selective colleges may require students to submit SAT scores for the mathematics component along with the TOEFL.

College Admission Test Dates

Registration Information

- Registration forms, including important information about preparing for standardized tests, may be obtained in the Guidance Office. You are encouraged to apply for these tests online. The Guidance Office has information on how to apply online or refer to the following websites:
www.collegeboard.com www.actstudent.org
- Unless otherwise noted, SAT and SAT subject tests are given at the same time on each of the test dates. You cannot take both on the same day. You can take up to three subject tests on the same date.
- See your school counselor for help to register for the TOEFL or to make arrangements for extended testing, if you qualify. Check with your counselor or case manager (if you have one) to learn about the requirements.
- If you are registering for the first time, register as early as possible.

Helpful Codes

- **310310:** The CEEB SAT/ACT high school code for Benedictine Academy.
- SAT and ACT college codes are included in the registration packets, and online and in Family Connection.

Reporting Your Scores

Students must instruct testing companies to send scores directly to colleges and universities. Benedictine Academy does not release test scores. Four score report requests are included with your registration. Additional score requests will incur a cost.

- Registration deadlines (postmark or online) range from three to five weeks before the test date.
- Check registration materials in print or online for specific dates. Late registration is available at an additional cost.
- Check in the Guidance Office or online to determine which subject tests are offered on SAT testing dates. Not all subject tests are given at every test administration.
- Check the registration bulletins or online registration to verify where the testing sites are located close to your home and apply early. **It is not fun to have to drive two hours before taking such important exams.**
- **Did you forget to register?** A very limited number of walk-in tests may be available for the SAT and ACT examinations at each site. Obtain further information and help from your school counselor if you need to go stand-by for an exam.

SAT Test Dates 2011-2012 go to: <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-dates>

ACT Test Dates 2011-2012 go to: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html>

SAT - ACT Score Comparisons

SAT to ACT		SAT to ACT	
1600	36	1060 - 1080	23
1560 – 1590	35	1020 – 1050	22
1510 – 1550	34	980 – 1010	21
1460 – 1500	33	940 – 970	20
1410 – 1450	32	900 - 930	19
1360 – 1400	31	860 - 890	18
1320 – 1350	30	810 - 850	17
1280 – 1310	29	760 - 800	16
1240 – 1270	28	710 - 750	15
1210 - 1230	27	660 - 700	14
1170 – 1200	26	590 - 650	13
1130 – 1160	25	520 - 580	12
1090 – 1120	24	500 - 510	11

Many colleges have yet to decide how to incorporate the writing/essay scores for these tests; hence the comparison of only critical reading and math sections is shown above.

The best preparation for scoring well on college entrance examinations is to take a strong high school program, to do your homework diligently and to read regularly for information and enjoyment. However, if your scores on the PSAT suggest that you test poorly or that you have gaps in your knowledge base, you and your family may want to consider some form of test preparation. A wide range of options is available with dramatic differences in description, time commitment, and cost. Select carefully. Make sure that test preparation does not negatively affect your performance in school.

Benedictine Academy does not advocate specific test preparation opportunities. However, a list of current test preparations is available through your school counselor.

Remember, standardized testing is only part of all the information that represents you and your accomplishments.

POTENTIAL COLLEGE ATHLETES

NCAA Requirements

If you plan to participate in Division I or Division II athletics, the NCAA Clearinghouse must certify you. It is your responsibility to make sure the Clearinghouse has the documents it needs for certification. You need to:

- 1 - Fill out the online form. www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
- 2 - Pay the fee of \$50, unless you request a fee waiver.
- 3 - Request your SATs or ACTs to be sent to the NCAA (CEEB Code - 9999).
- 4 - Request an official transcript be sent to the NCAA from each high school you attended at the end of your junior year.

A high school student, who plans on playing a sport or hopes to receive an athletic scholarship at a Division I or II college, must meet specific academic requirements as set forth by the NCAA.

Division I - A student must have at least a 2.0 GPA in 16 **Core academic courses** AND the required SAT or ACT score based on the test score sliding scale.

Division II – A student must have a 2.0 GPA in 14 **Core academic courses** AND a combined SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

Subject	Division I	Division II
English Core	4 Years	3 Years
Math Core	3 Years (Alg. 1 or above)	2 Years (Alg. 1 or above)
Science Core	2 Years	2 Years
Additional Eng/Math/Sci	1 Year	2 Years
Social Science Core	2 Years	2 Years
Additional Academic		
Courses from Approved List	4 Years	3 Years
Total	16	14

NCAA Clearinghouse
Certification Processing
P.O. Box 7136
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7136
www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
Phone – 877-262-1492
(customer service: Mon. – Fri., 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Eastern time)

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Researching the Institutions

Now for the exciting part of this process: researching and selecting an institution that offers you the best opportunity to achieve your goals. The experience is made more manageable if you use the resources available. College fairs and the Benedictine Academy High School Counseling Office offer two types of opportunities to visit with college admission representatives in a convenient setting.

College Fairs

In the fall and spring, many schools and organizations, including the National Association for College Admission Counseling, sponsor college fairs. If you attend these fairs with your parents, you learn more about educational and career opportunities after high school. You also will have the opportunity to meet with admission representatives. These fairs are held in several locations throughout the Metropolitan area.

You will learn of the dates and locations of these fairs through the Guidance Office. You may obtain details on how to prepare for them from your counselor.

Visiting with College Representatives at BENELECTINE ACADEMY

Each year, approximately colleges send representatives to Benedictine Academy High School to talk with prospective students. The majority of these visits occur during first semester.

The representative provides current, accurate information about the institution and the admission policies. He or she also is another contact for you with the admission office. The representative with whom you speak at Benedictine Academy may be the same one who will process your application and participate in your admission decision.

The schedule of college visits is posted on Family Connection.

You should plan ahead to visit with the college representatives and obtain a pass from the Guidance Counselor. You must get permission from your teacher to miss class time for a meeting with a college representative. **You may only attend three (3) sessions.**

Before Seeing the Representative

- Make an appropriate arrangement.
- Learn about the campus from the resources such as, catalog, friends and/or the Internet.
- Know your standardized test scores and your grade point average for a better conversation with the representative.

When you are with the Representative

- Meet the representative in the School cafeteria or other room specified in the bulletin.

- Plan to meet with the representative for about 30 minutes. If you cannot attend, leave your name and address and ask that the representative call you or send you information. Some representatives are in the area for at least a week at a time, and it is often possible to schedule evening appointments.
- Recognize that you are not there to impress the representative, but to gain information. Be comfortable, whether there are many students seeing the representative or you are the only one.
- Be courteous, prompt, and professional. Dress appropriately.
- Take notes so you may refer to them later.
- Ask for the correct spelling of the representative's name and write it down. If you apply to that school, you will want to name the representative you met.

Campus Visits

It would be unfair – to yourself and to the college – to judge a school just on the basis of its catalog. Visiting or revisiting a college campus will help you make the “right” choice for you. While we realize that it can be very costly to visit all the colleges before you apply, it is essential to visit the colleges after you have been accepted and before you make your final decision. If you cannot visit a college or university before you apply, we suggest look at a virtual campus tour on the internet. Find these links on the benedictineacad.org go to Guidance/other links.

We also suggest that when you call the admissions office, you request to have an upper classman call you, so you can ask them pertinent questions. Most students, while advocating for their school, are usually open and honest. Also remember, we live in the vicinity of many colleges. Taking tours of local campuses can give you a good idea of what you like and dislike in a prospective college. It will help you be more discerning in your choices.

BEFORE YOUR TRIP

1. Go online or call the admissions office and inquire about campus tours and admission talks. There usually are set days and times.
2. If time permits, arrange an overnight stay in the dorm.
3. Inquire about an interview with an admissions counselor. Some schools will not interview at all. If you do get an appointment, be prepared to ask questions. Come with your resume and an unofficial transcript, which you can obtain from your counselor.
4. Pick up back copies of the campus newspaper. They are very revealing about the issues affecting the student body.
5. Pick up last year's course offerings. While many schools list hundreds of courses in their catalog, it is important to find out what they actually offered. Can you get all the courses you need within four years?

WHILE ON CAMPUS

1. Take a tour and hear an admissions talk.
2. Walk around on your own and talk to students. You may feel bashful, but chances are they are flattered to tell you about their school.
3. Eat a meal on campus.

4. If you have a strong inclination toward a course of study, visit that department. Interview a faculty person. If you are in the science department, check out the labs. What research is going on? Can lower classmen participate?
5. Find the student placement office. Browse through the bulletins. Where do students find jobs after graduation? How?
6. Arrange an interview in the financial aid office. Ask lots of questions. Inquire about their financial aid application process, tuition payment plans and work-study programs.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

1. Write down as much information about your visit as you can remember. Include names of people you met.
2. Record your personal impressions of the school – both negative and positive. Did people seem friendly? Stressed? (Exam time does not count.) Did you like the dorms? Was it easy to get around?
3. Jot down some comparisons with other colleges. Such as “I like this better at College A than at B because . . .” The more careful notes you take now, the better prepared you will be when it comes time to make a decision.
4. When you get home, set up a college file. One folder or file per school. You can invest in a cheap “egg crate,” which is an essential in most dorm rooms anyway. Every time you receive information from that college, put it in the file. Keep everything together.

Choosing a College

With thousands of colleges and universities to choose from, your task can be challenging. However, if you take the time to think about some of the following considerations, the decision will be easier. Take your list of priorities to your school counselor who will help you choose several places where you can be successful and happy.

Academic Environment

When assessing the academic environment of the college or university, ask yourself the following questions:

- Will this college admit me?
- Have I satisfied the course or other academic requirements of the college?
- Are my test scores in the appropriate range for this school?
- Are the standards appropriate for my abilities and interests?
- What courses are required of all freshmen?
- When will I have the opportunity to study with full professors rather than graduate students?
- What are the typical class sizes both for first year students and upper class students?
- What is the availability of counseling or tutorial programs in the event that I experience academic difficulty?

- Where do graduates of this college attend graduate school?
- What kinds of professions and careers do they enter after graduation?

Majors

Most students change their majors at least once during their college careers. Some courses of study are not available at the high school level and other fields that seem unappealing to you now may become much more exciting as you become more involved.

However, you probably have a general idea of at least two or three areas that interest you, and you may want to consider how strong those departments are at the colleges you are considering. Also of concern is the library and laboratory facilities or other special equipment required by your area of interest.

Geographic Location

For some students, attending a college close to home is a priority while others choose to be far away. Perhaps as important as the distance from home is the type of college community.

- Do you yearn for a peaceful academic environment in a small intellectual town?
- Do you prefer the stimulation and excitement of a large urban campus?
- Is there a particular part of the country where you have always wanted to live?
- Do you prefer a location where you have relatives or close friends?
- If coming home for the holidays and long weekends is important, are distance, transportation costs, and availability prohibitive?

Size of Campus

- A **large campus** (15,000 – 50,000) may offer a variety of academic opportunities including elaborate facilities and large libraries, as well as the stimulation of a large faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. However, housing may be more difficult to obtain, more courses may be taught by graduate students, lecture sessions may be very large, and opportunities for leadership in campus organizations may be diminished.
- A **medium – sized school** (5,000 – 15,000) may offer fewer majors and more modest facilities than a large school, but may offer greater opportunities to participate in activities of your choice and to be integrated into a compatible crowd.
- **Small schools** (fewer than 5,000) usually offer more personal classes, earlier opportunities to take classes with well-known professors, and more chances for leadership in campus activities. However, facilities may be limited and options for activities and diversity reduced.

Affordability

Calculate what it costs to attend your selected college for a year. Also calculate your college costs on a four-year basis. Identify the ways to pay for these costs. Examine the college's track record for providing scholarships, loans, and other financial assistance.

Housing, food, books, and the cost of participating in extracurricular activities are part of the college expense as well. Also calculate the cost of travel to and from home.

If the college offers scholarships, grants, loans, or employment programs that can assist you in financing your education, learn the application deadlines and which programs are available to freshmen. Ask if the college assists with finding part-time work on campus or locally.

Housing and Dining Options

Some college students prefer the independence of having an apartment and being self-sufficient. For others, a large coed residence hall with 100 students on each floor sounds like an ideal way to make new friends. Still others may prefer a smaller single sex residence hall with the chance to get to know a few people well. All of these options exist, many on the same campus.

On many campuses, sororities and fraternities provide much of the housing. While you may want to join a fraternity or sorority, also find out what housing exists for those who choose not to join particularly at the junior or senior levels.

College is probably your first real opportunity to be “on your own” with more responsibility for your actions than you may have had in high school. College can provide a wonderful transition to independent adult living, so use the housing options available to make that transition in the best way for you.

Health and Other Services

Most colleges provide basic physical and psychological health services to students. Some may have full service hospitals on campus or have affiliated medical schools which provide such services. Others may have a simple infirmary and refer complicated illnesses and injuries to local physicians. Find out what services are provided and which will require additional payments. If you have particular health problems or physical limitations, make a more thorough inquiry of services available.

Colleges also provide a number of services to help students with special needs compensate for their disabilities. Support services range from minimal support to comprehensive programs depending on individual assessment of students’ needs. Tutoring, writing and mathematics labs, and career guidance are generally available to all students. Investigate the nature of these services.

Student Life

Explore the atmosphere on the campus you are considering.

- Is it liberal, conservative, homogeneous, or diverse?
- Do the students appear friendly and enthusiastic about their school?
- Can you observe how students and faculty relate to each other?
- Are you satisfied with the recreational facilities and social activities offered?
- Are sports facilities adequate to meet your interests?

- Are there sororities and fraternities, and if so, what part do they play in the social life on campus?
- Does the campus “clear out” on weekends?
- Are there special interest groups in areas that interest you?
- Are activities like the newspaper, debate, or the ceramic shop available to all students or just to those majoring in related areas?
- Can you find opportunities for political expression?
- Is the college affiliated with a religion, and if so, how strongly?
- Can you attend religious services of your preference easily?
- What type of academic advice is available? Some schools have a faculty advisement system. At others the student must find a faculty mentor.

You also may want to consider a single-sex college. In all considerations, determine if the campus atmosphere will be comfortable for you as a man or a woman.

The best advice regarding “student life” is to look for an intellectual and social climate that fits your sense of self and one in which you will feel comfortable and challenged.

Making a Final List

Once you have researched and obtained answers to your questions about the schools that interest you, your next step is choosing a college:

- Summarize what you want from your college experience.
- List the colleges which meet your criteria including all the items on your summary as well as admission standards, geographic location, and affordability.
- Organize your list according to the colleges you most want to attend and the ones that are most likely to accept you.
- Request the applications or obtain online. **Remember: apply only to colleges you would gladly attend if accepted.**

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

The college application is your opportunity to make a good impression on the college of your choice. **You won’t get a second chance to make that first impression.** With the exception of the service academies, the college application process begins in earnest in the fall of your senior year. You should follow these steps:

- • Obtain the applications directly from the colleges, or download them through the individual college websites. The Common Application may be downloaded from the following website, www.commonapp.org, used by over 1500 colleges.
- • Make a copy of the applications before you fill them out.
- • Organize your personal records, such as the resume. This will help you determine what information you want to include on your application.
- • Make a draft of all required essays. Allow time to review your essays while you complete the application forms.
- • Read the directions carefully and obey all instructions.
- • Pay specific attention to the application deadlines. Allow **three to four weeks** to process the transcript packet and send your transcripts to requested colleges. **No transcript packet will be processed or sent to the college without payment attached to the request. Each transcript is \$4.00.**
- • Answer all questions. Use N/A (not applicable) if the question does not apply.
- • Make sure your essay is in its final form.
- • Select references wisely. Use those who personally know you, your academic record, your strengths and your accomplishments.
- • Make a copy of each application for your records.

Most colleges mail their notification letters by April and you will have until May 1 to choose from colleges offering admission. You should your counselor when you receive a response to an application. Once you have decided where you will attend, please notify all other schools to which you have applied of your intent.

Electronic (Online) Applications

Even though you know you have applied electronically, your counselor does not. Please help the counselor by following these important steps:

- Request in writing by filling out the Transcript Release Form the colleges to which you have applied/plan to apply and require an official transcript to be sent. Please be cognizant of deadlines for requests. “An emergency on your end does not constitute an emergency on our end.”
- Arrange for your official ACT or SAT scores to be sent by contacting College Board or ACT. Because you are e-applying, your application will arrive at the admissions office in parts. **Do not panic** if you receive a post card indicating that the college has not yet received your high school transcript. In addition to the three-four weeks Benedictine Academy may require to prepare and mail the transcript packet, another two to three weeks may be necessary for the college to receive the transcript, enter it in the computer system, and place it with your application materials for admission consideration. As a result, if you telephone the college admissions office to determine whether or not they have your transcript, understand that it may be in a mail or data processing queue and not yet acknowledged.

In some cases transmission of the application is not completed. Keep a calendar of when you submitted the e-application and look for signals that it has been received: a postcard or e-mail verifying receipt, or the “missing parts” letter requesting your transcript and scores. Watch to make sure that any application fee is actually posted on your family credit card report.

Writing the Essay

Colleges often include one or more essay questions on their applications. Some schools require you to write on a specific topic; others request essays about personal goals and ambitions. Essays give admissions officers opportunity to evaluate your writing ability and to estimate your potential contribution to the non-academic life of the college. It is helpful to describe previous jobs and to show how these jobs influenced the choice of a career or college major. The essay may also describe family responsibilities. Your senior year will be very busy! Start your essays now to reduce stress next year.

There is no one way to write an effective essay, but the following is a list of some suggestions that will help you:

DO

- try to encapsulate the main idea in one sentence before writing
- write clearly - if it sounds vague, change it
- use words with which you feel comfortable
- try to be unique and engaging
- express, not impress
- edit and rewrite until your essay says what you mean
- check all spelling and grammar before typing your essay onto the application
- be specific and use details
- let the first draft sit a while without reading it

DO NOT

- use slang
- try to be “cute”
- use words you cannot define
- begin your essay with, “My name is...”
- digress from the original topic
- continue your essay beyond the specified number of words
- be too general - focus on one meaningful episode in your life rather than a complete history

Sample Essay Questions

- Since our knowledge is limited to the information provided, why not then use this opportunity to tell us anything you think we should know?
- What do you see as the turning point(s) or important events in your life and why do you view them as such?
- Who are the people who have done the most to influence your personal development and in what ways were they influential?
- What prominent person (past or present) do you particularly admire? Why?
- What idea has most influenced your life? Explain.
- What is the most critical moral, ethical, or social problem facing America?
- Describe your ideal of the honorable person. Feel free to use examples.
- Discuss briefly the one or two extracurricular, work or community activities that have meant the most to you.
- Write a brief essay of 200-500 words on any topic of direct personal importance to you.
- What responsibility have you had for others and how has it affected your personal growth?
- Make up a question, state it clearly, and answer it. Use your imagination, recognizing that those who read it will not mind being entertained.
- If you were given the opportunity to spend an evening with any one person, living, deceased, or fictional, which person would you choose and why?
- Please cite and discuss a literary quotation or brief passage that has special meaning to you.
- We invite you to reflect on an issue or experience that is significant to you or to your perspective on the world around you. We do not ask a specific question or present a topic for this essay because the subject you choose tells us almost as much about you as the way you discuss it. We encourage you to choose your own topic and write about it in a way consistent with both the topic and your personality.
- Write a personal essay of 250-500 words. Use this essay to help us learn more about you – your experiences, values, or interests. You might describe a person or event that has been especially influential in your life; you might write about your goals for the future; or you may write about anything that you feel will enable us to know you better.
- Describe a situation in which your values or beliefs caused conflict with someone you respect. How was the situation resolved?

Recommendation Letters

Many colleges ask you to supplement your application with letters of recommendation. It is **your** responsibility to determine what letters, if any, are required. Colleges may specify that recommendations come from:

- • Teachers in academic subjects who can speak to your academic strengths.
- • Coaches and teachers who can attest to your athletic or artistic talent.
- • Counselor who can address your personal strengths, accomplishments, and special circumstances which might impact on an admission decision; or others, such as club

sponsors, religious leaders, employers, who can give evidence of your character and leadership ability.

Steps for Securing Recommendations:

- Read the directions on the application. How many recommendations do you need? Whom should you contact for a recommendation? Prepare a short list of teachers who you think would write good recommendations for you. Most colleges prefer a variety of disciplines, for example English and science. Generally, the teachers should be ones you have had either junior or senior year.
- Choose the teachers who know you well to write recommendations for you. If you have decided on a general area of college study, you may want to select a teacher in that discipline. For example, if you are interested in engineering, select a math or science teacher. If you are interested in law, perhaps your social studies or English teacher would be advisable.
- Ask your selected teachers if they are willing to write you a recommendation letter. Do not assume they will do so. Some teachers are asked to write more than 50 recommendations per year. Ask early. Confirm the request in writing.
- Provide all necessary forms and information to your teacher at least one month before the recommendation letter is due. Since the teacher may be asked to comment on your intellectual and your personal attributes, provide your resume of activities and interests beyond the specific teacher's course as requested. Include a pre-addressed, stamped envelope for each college for your teacher's convenience. Ask your teacher to also provide a copy of the letter to your counselor.
- Approximately one week before the letter is due, thank your teachers for writing the letters for you. If they have already written their letters, they will appreciate the thoughtfulness. If they have not yet written the letter, your comments will remind them of the deadline.

When you matriculate or enter a particular college, you have the right under Federal law to view your recommendation letters although you can waive that right. You may want to waive that right to see the letter since some admissions officers will note your waiver and may give added credibility to the honest, un-reviewed letter of your teacher or counselor. The choice is yours.

Requesting Transcripts

Completely fill out the BA Release of Records form (Appendix F). This form **MUST** include the name of the college, city, state, CEEB Code, type of admissions and the college deadline. A parent **MUST** sign all initial forms or they will not be processed. If applying for an honors program or scholarship, note this on the form and its specific deadline as that often differs from the college deadline. If this information is not filled out, your form will not be processed. **All forms should be turned into the Guidance Office.**

Requests are \$4 per transcript, payable at the time of the request. No request will be processed without payment. There is no charge for scholarship applications.

Your initial request should be submitted **3-4 weeks PRIOR** to your first college deadline. If the initial request is late, the counselor may only send the transcript and secondary school report (SSR) form and as time permits and if required, a letter of recommendation will follow.

If requests are made less than **three weeks** prior to a deadline, there will be a \$5 late fee imposed for each request, regardless if this a reprint.. When initial requests are made **five** days or less prior to a deadline, the counselor may only send the transcript and school profile and as time permits, a SSR and if required, a letter of recommendation will follow.

Completed forms and necessary payment should be turned into the Guidance Office. Please include your payment in an envelope marked with your name and attach it to your form. The information is entered into Family Connection. Request for additional college transcripts **NEED** to be in writing.

The Parents' Role in the College Application Process

The application period is a time of anxiety for your daughter. Help your child by seeing that she follows the procedures properly and meets all deadlines. Be an active participant in the exploration process and offer your guidance as your child weighs information and creates the list of schools to which she will apply. Be certain that your daughter completes all admission requirements in accordance with required deadlines.

With your child, file all required financial aid forms by the deadline. Colleges may require one or more of the following financial aid and related forms.

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), required by all colleges for applicants for need-based aid and/or loans from state and federal sources. There is no charge to submit the FAFSA.
- CSS Profile or the College Scholarship Service, is required by some colleges and universities (mostly private). Check to determine whether each college requires the CSS Profile and send the Profile only to the colleges that require it. There is a fee for processing the Profile and sending it to each college.
- The college's own financial aid form, which is returned directly to the college and for which there is no fee.
- Financial records as requested by the college, most often copies of the parents' and students' federal income tax returns.

The college application process can be time consuming and detract from routine student responsibilities. Make sure that your daughter keeps up with all schoolwork and maintains good study habits during this active time. Encourage patience, persistence, and good humor at all times.

If your daughter has applied to a range of different types of schools, your child will have a choice if she selected well. Should a negative response be received, provide consolation and support. When good news is received, seize the time to praise and congratulate your child. It will be a very happy time for everyone. You now have a college freshman in the family!

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is the combination of resources which supplement what parents and students are able to contribute to meet the costs of a college education. The assumption of the financial aid system is that the cost of higher education is the responsibility of the family. This federally funded system is **designed to provide access and choice** for students and families who would otherwise be limited in their educational opportunities. Financial need is determined by calculating all the various costs of the education and subtracting an estimated family contribution.

Financial aid comes in four forms. Most financial aid packages usually offer a combination of these four:

- **Grants** (need-based monies) and **Gifts** (merit-based monies).
Grants and gift monies do not have to be repaid. Some schools term these “scholarships.” In other cases, “scholarships” are gifts offered in the name of the person endowing the fund to the students who fit the particular stipulation of the fund.
- **College Work Study** allows the student to work on campus in a job arranged by the Financial Aid Office.
- **Loans**, which usually have low interest rates, must be repaid.
- **Federal and/or State Loans** must be repaid as stipulated.

Application Process for Need-Based Financial Aid

To qualify for financial aid, a student should use one or both of the following forms which are available through the College/Career Resource Center or the FAFSA website at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Check with your college or university to find out which form is required.

- **FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid** is the application all students must file to be considered for Title IV aid. This form should be completed by all families desiring need-based financial aid. The FAFSA is the core document required for all need-based aid. This FAFSA is to be compiled, signed and mailed, or e-transmitted soon after January 1 of the student’s senior year.
- **The CSS/Financial Aid Profile form** is a second form required by some colleges, primarily private schools. Registration for the Profile may be done via Internet beginning mid-September.

You may obtain both FAFSA and the CSS/Financial Aid Profile information from the College/Career Resource Center in the fall of your senior year. In addition, colleges often have their own needs analysis form. Follow the instructions carefully for each different institution.

Ultimately, all financial aid decisions are made by the individual college; therefore, it is necessary for you to work with the financial aid officer at the school to which are you are applying. Also be sure to apply on time. File the FAFSA form soon after January 1 of your senior year and preferably before February 1. (The sooner you file, the better your chances for being considered for limited funds. Also be aware that meeting these deadlines necessitates that income tax forms be completed early.)

Check deadlines carefully on all other applications, such as scholarships. Once you matriculate to the college of your choice, be sure to reapply every January. Your financial aid is not automatically renewed. Check the renewal requirements of all other awards.

Additional Sources of Financial Aid Information (Need- and Merit-Based)

- Religious Organizations
- Club Memberships
- Civic Organizations
- College-Sponsored Aid Programs
- National Merit Scholarship Program
- Parent/Student Employers
- Veteran Organizations
- Insurance Companies

Ultimately, all financial aid decisions are made by the individual college; therefore, it is necessary for you to work with the financial aid officer at each school to which you are applying. Also, be sure to apply on time.

Researching Financial Aid at Benedictine Academy

Locating scholarships and other awards is somewhat complicated. Unfortunately, no single source lists where all financial information might be found; places of employment, places of worship, and clubs and organizations may provide awards.

Scholarship notices received by Benedictine Academy are categorized and filed for easy accessibility.

- Notice of all funding opportunities, including scholarships from institutes and foundations, FAFSA availability, and deadlines are provided to seniors through the Guidance Office or Family Connection (scholarship database). Additional information on all scholarships announced may be available on the Guidance school website as well.
- High School Counseling Services sponsors a Financial Planning Night in September.

529 Plan Basics

“529” refers to a section of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code that allows students and their families to invest money tax-free for college, and earn interest on those investments. While plans differ from state to state, they do share some advantages and disadvantages.

What are the advantages?

- Earnings made on your investment are exempt from federal tax as long as your money is in the plan. Earnings are also exempt from federal tax when funds are withdrawn to pay for qualified college expenses.
- The amount of money that a family can contribute tax-free to a 529 Plan (more than \$200,000 in some states) is significantly higher than in other plans.
- The plans are easy to use. Because the earnings are managed by the state, you can basically make your deposits and forget about them until it comes time to make a withdrawal.

What are the disadvantages?

- Funds in your 529 Plan are considered parental assets and are taken into account when calculating federal financial aid. Your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) will include up to 5.6% of the value of your 529 account each academic year.
- If you need to withdraw funds for purposes not related to a college education, the federal government will impose a 10% penalty on your earnings. (You would still get back 100% of your principal.) The earnings will also be subject to a capital gains tax.
- 529 Plans can be confusing, especially when you consider that each state has its own unique plan. Consider the possibility that if you decide not to go to college, your earnings in the plan are no longer tax-free. Get more information: www.collegesavings.org

Questions to ask Colleges about Financial Aid

- What kind of financial assistance does the college offer: need-based, merit-based, or both?
- What forms are needed in order to apply?
 - FAFSA
 - institutional application
- When is the application deadline date?
- What institutional costs are taken into account by the financial aid offer? Tuition, room, board? Does the assistance take into account additional costs? Books and fees, transportation, personal expenses, etc.?
- When will the family be notified about the amount of assistance they could expect?
- Does the institution have an appeal process to review special circumstances?
- Is there a commitment for assistance beyond the first year?
- How and when do you apply for financial aid after the freshman year?

- What if the family doesn't qualify for need-based aid? Are there alternative financing options available?
- What is the average loan indebtedness of students at the time of graduation?
- How long does it take a student to graduate? Four years? Longer?

Helpful References

Federal Student Aid Information Center

1-800-4-FED-AID

P.O. Box 84

Washington, D.C. 20044

www.collegesavings.org

www.fastweb.com

www.wiredscholar.com

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Cost-Saving Alternatives

Whether or not you apply for financial aid, you and your family may want to discuss alternative strategies for paying for college. As with each decision involved in planning for your future, be sure to choose one that matches your abilities, goals, and personality.

A Wise College Choice

Over 50 percent of college freshmen do not graduate from the college where they start.

Transferring from college to college may cost you one or more semesters and a considerable amount of additional money. If you think you are likely to switch majors, be sure to attend a college that offers a broad range of majors so you need not transfer.

Advanced Placement (AP) Credit

Many colleges and universities grant college credit on a course-by-course basis for Advanced Placement courses/tests taken in high school. Strategically considered, the AP program can facilitate completing college in less than the traditional four years, a definite cost savings.

Additional Years to Earn Degree

Sixty percent of all college graduates now take up to six years to graduate. If you take fewer courses and work part time, with careful planning and self-discipline, you can maintain your grades and help pay some costs during your college years.

Cooperative Education Program

A cooperative education program allows you to attend school for a semester or more and then work at a related, paying job for a semester or more. A co-op program, which usually takes five or more years to complete, can open opportunities for employment upon graduation.

ROTC – Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines

You can receive a stipend of \$100 per month up to the full cost of your college education, plus

all expenses, if you make a commitment to serve in the military after college. Contact the college ROTC office or your local recruiting office to find out how the military will help pay for your college education.

Financial aid information is subject to change.

MILITARY OPTIONS

Service Academies

The United States maintains five service academies: the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York; the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland; the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado; the United States Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut; and the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York. The mission of the service academies is to provide the instruction and experience necessary to produce graduates with knowledge, character, and leadership abilities to become career military officers.

Students interested in attending a service academy should begin research/planning as early as the spring of their junior year.

Service Academy Admissions Process

1. Determine if you meet the requirements and qualifications. Each candidate must:
 - Be 17 but not yet 22.
 - Be a U.S. citizen at the time of enrollment.
 - Be unmarried with no dependents.
 - Have an above average high school record.
 - Have strong scores on the SAT or ACT.
 - Be in good physical health.
 - Have above average strength, endurance, and agility.
2. Apply for a nomination. As a minimum you should apply to your two United States senators, your congressional representative, and the Vice President. Some members of Congress will not accept applications for nominations after a specific date. You should request a nomination as soon as possible. In addition to the letter, the nomination process may include a questionnaire or interview.
3. Start a file at the academy. Send a letter to the admissions office requesting a pre-candidate questionnaire. The academy will open a file for you upon receipt of the completed questionnaire.
4. Fill out the academy forms. These forms will be sent to you after an evaluation of your pre-candidate questionnaire.
5. Take the SAT or ACT. Send your scores to the academies to which you are applying.
6. Pass the medical exam from the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DOD MERB) and the Physical Aptitude Exam (PAE).
7. Receive notification of the evaluation and status of your application. This may arrive as early as November for outstanding candidates; final decisions are made in April.

Service Academy Addresses

U.S. Air Force Academy

Cadet Admissions Office
Colorado Springs, CO 80840-5651
800-443-9266
www.usafa.edu

U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Director of Admissions
New London, CT 06320-4195
860-444-8500
www.cga.edu

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

300 Steamboat Road
Kings Point, NY 11024-1699
516-773-5391/866-546-4778
www.usmma.edu

U.S. Naval Academy

117 Decatur Road
Annapolis, MD 21402-5018
410-293-4361
www.usna.edu

U.S. Military Academy of West Point

Director of Admissions
West Point, NY 10996-1797
845-938-4041
www.usma.edu

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)

The ROTC program provides you the opportunity to attend a civilian college while studying military leadership as part of a total undergraduate program. ROTC is a college elective, which requires about four hours a week. It is offered at hundreds of campuses. Applications are available upon request from college ROTC units or on the websites.

www.armyrotc.com - Army ROTC
www.afrotc.com - Air Force ROTC
www.nrotc.navy.mil/ - Navy ROTC

The program is divided into two parts, the basic course and the advanced course. The basic course is normally attended during your first two years of college with no military commitment. After completing this course, students may enroll in the advanced course. At this time, they will incur a military obligation.

Military Enlistment

Opportunities for enlistment in the military are plentiful. The five services offer over hundreds of schools and thousands of courses of instruction. This training, and the experience that follows, give the military veteran a real advantage in the civilian world.

Enlisting in military service right after high school is an option. The U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard provide job training in many fields, as well as opportunities for enlistees to take some college-level courses. The services can also help you build a college fund.

The U.S. National Guard consists of two components: the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the Air National Guard (ANG). Its mission is to serve the state in times of natural disaster or civil disturbance, and the nation in time of war. Flexible scheduling makes it possible for you to combine service in the National Guard with work or school. The Guard meets one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer. U.S. National Guard also offers educational benefits.

Each service sets its own enlistment qualifications. Contact your local recruiters for information or visit their websites regarding qualifications and program opportunities.

www.army.mil - Army

www.navy.mil - Navy

www.af.mil - Air Force

www.mc.mil - Marine Corps

www.uscg.mil - Coast Guard

www.ngb.dtic.mil - National Guard

For additional information see the Military Career Guide at www.militarycareers.com

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship is an employer's training program. It is a time-honored program combining on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction (RI). The result is a skilled craftsperson. When you complete both on-the-job training and the related instruction, you become a registered apprentice. Registered apprentices completing a full program receive a State Apprenticeship Certificate upon completion. This certificate is nationally recognized.

Examples of Apprenticeship Programs:

Carpentry

Cosmetology

Electricity

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning

Machinist

Nail Technician

Office Administrative Support Specialist

Optician

Plumbing

Surveying

Apprenticeship Terms/Definitions

Apprentice

- Agency responsible for supervision and certification of OJT, registering apprentices, certifying and registering employers, and issuing state certificates.

Apprenticeship Information in the Washington, D.C. Area:

Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-698-5099

FINDING THE JOB

Successful job hunting refers not only to finding a job, but also to finding the best job possible and having a successful interview. When employment is plentiful this may not present a problem; but when jobs are scarce, you may have to think creatively and investigate many sources. Listed below are suggested resources:

- Relatives, friends, and neighbors
- Counselors and teachers
- Help wanted ads and bulletin boards
- Civil service, county, state, and federal agencies
- Private employment agencies
- Walk-in inquiries
- Job fairs
- Trade journals and directories (available in the library)
- Fellow employees
- Contacts made through volunteer activities
- Online job bulletin boards

How to Compete Successfully

- Develop a list of businesses that usually hire people with your skills and ask for an interview.
- Do not wait for businesses to advertise. Be assertive.
- Do not underestimate smaller businesses. Most of the workforce is employed by small companies.
- Find out what new businesses are opening in your area and when they will begin hiring.
- Target jobs in rapidly expanding fields.
- Develop a resume (See pages 14-15).

A resume is a brief description of your previous education, work experience, and additional relevant information. The purpose of a resume is:

- To introduce you to an employer;
 - To serve as an example of how you think and express yourself;
 - To catalog skills, experience, training and achievements;
 - To pursue an interview!
- Prepare for the interview.
 - Companies like candidates who know what they want. They are impressed with someone who has done some research before arriving at the interview. Make the effort to research your target organization, and you'll find yourself ahead of the competition. Given two equal candidates, the one who shows the most interest usually wins.
 - You can find out about larger organizations by using web search engines, or, even better, by going to your target organization's website (search engines can help you find it). There are other web-based resources, too. If your company is smaller or local, visit the library and ask the research librarian for help.
 - As you do this research, make note of the organizer's purpose, products or services, chief executive's name, and any recent news or company developments. Take notes with you to the interview, and use them ahead of time to develop questions of your own. The extra effort is sure to show...and it could win you the job.
 - All employers are looking for the ideal candidate for the job. Employers have a set of criteria in mind for the ideal candidate. During the interview process, the employer is evaluating the skills, abilities, and personal qualities of the person being interviewed.
 - As you respond to interview questions, remember to present your desire to do the job, your ability to do the job, your willingness to do the job, and a realistic assessment of your value to the company. If you keep these four factors in mind, you will answer questions effectively and present yourself well, and increase your chances of being hired.

Points to remember:

- An interview is an opportunity for two people to meet and determine whether an employer-employee relationship will prove beneficial to both parties. Be prepared to respond to a series of questions from the interviewer to determine your suitability for the position. Develop a list of questions for the interviewer to determine if the position is an appropriate fit for you.
- Dress properly, be on time, listen intently, demonstrate your potential and enthusiasm, and provide brief, well thought-out responses to the questions.
- Make a good first impression – Look the interviewer in the eye. Shake hands firmly. Smile, say, "Hello, it's great to meet you." Relax and enjoy your interview. Leave any personal concerns at home. Showing confidence in yourself will create a favorable impression.
- Concentrate on giving examples of your accomplishments.

- At the conclusion of the interview - emphasize you are interested in taking the process to the next step and why you are the ideal candidate. Shake hands, make sincere eye contact and say, “thank you.”
- Follow up - Write a “thank you” note. If you would like to add something you forgot, do it now. Believe in your ability to learn and grow.

Typical Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you perceive to be your greatest strengths?
- What are your most important career accomplishments?
- What is the most difficult situation you have ever faced?
- What are your career goals?
- How do you cope with stressful situations?
- How do you see yourself working with others on the job?
- What are the things that motivate you?
- What do you value in a job?
- Why would you like to work for us?
- What do you want us to remember about you?

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

- What is the potential for personal and professional growth opportunities within the company?
- What challenges would I face within this position?
- Usually, do NOT ask about salary in the first interview.
- Be sure to know what the next steps are after the interview. When will you be contacted? Do they want to follow up? How?

WEBSITES RELATED TO POST-SECONDARY PLANNING

General College/Career Search Information

www.collegeboard.com - The College Board homepage.

www.petersons.com - Peterson's Guides: includes a lot of information on colleges, the application process, and many other links.

www.geocities.com/canadian_universities/index.html - listing of Canadian universities and links to homepages.

www.smart.net/~pope/hbcu/hbculist.htm - information on historically black colleges and universities and related links of interest to African American universities.

www.careerbuilder.com - search through help wanted ads from many papers from around the country.

Standardized Testing Information

www.collegeboard.com - The College Board homepage.

www.kaplan.com - Kaplan's homepage with information on colleges, financial aid, and test preparation.

www.review.com/college - Princeton Review's page of information, including many practice SAT questions.

www.act.org - Information on the American College Testing Assessment.

Financial Aid Information

www.finaid.org - Financial Aid Information Page: free information on financial aid and scholarships; one of the most comprehensive financial aid sites.

www.fastweb.com - Fast Web: financial search through the web, free scholarship search.

www.ed.gov/finaid/landing.jhtml?src=rt - U.S. Department of Education: information on the FAFSA and federal student financial aid programs.

www.salliemae.com - Sallie Mae: information on college costs and financing college.

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> - information and application for federal student aid.

www.ncaa.clearinghouse.org - information about initial-eligibility at NCAA Division I and II member colleges and universities.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

Your Rights

Before you apply:

- You have the right to receive full information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial aid, scholarship, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early decision plan, you have a right to full disclosure from the college about its process and policy.

When you are offered admission:

- You have the right to wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1st.
- Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission, financial assistance, and/or housing prior to May 1st, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1st. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for housing and/or financial aid. (This right does not apply to candidates admitted under an early decision program.)

If you are placed on a waitlist or alternate list:

- The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the waitlist, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.
- Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a waitlist.
- Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your waitlist status by August 1st at the latest.

Your Responsibilities

Before you apply:

- Research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. Be sure that you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits that you may be required to make **before you enroll.**

As you apply:

- Complete all material required for application, and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. Be the sole author of your applications.
- Seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.

- Arrange for visits and/or interviews at the colleges of your choice, if appropriate.

After you receive your admission decisions:

- Notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. Make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision, but no later than May 1st.
- Confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. (The exception to this arises if you are put on a waitlist by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify the college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll, if applicable.)
- If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications.

If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

If you think that your rights have been denied, contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, ask your counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association of College Admission Counselors. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to:

Executive Director, NACAC, 1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2818.

The information presented here is consistent with changes to the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice, approved in 2005.

APPENDICES

Benedictine Academy 2011-2012

Appendix A

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND CHECKLIST

Section 1: Completing College Applications

_____ Check out college websites, college handbooks, Family Connection, information on the BA website . List the colleges to which you plan to apply.

_____ Complete the college applications carefully. Many colleges prefer that applications be submitted electronically (online). If completing an online application, print a hard copy to proofread before sending. Review all applications before sending. Neatness and accuracy are important. Also, if the college you are applying to requires the Common Application, please see your counselor prior to starting the application process.

_____ Complete all the forms required and submit the application fee directly to the college.

Section 2: Requesting Test Scores

_____ BA **does not send test scores** to the colleges or NCAA. If test scores were not requested to be sent at the time of the test registration, log back into the testing website and request your official scores for the SAT Reasoning test , SAT Subject tests, ACT and/or TOEFL be sent directly to all colleges you have applied.

SAT www.collegeboard.com ACT www.actstudent.org

Section 3: Recommendations (minimum of 3 weeks in advance)

_____ **Counselor Recommendation:** Most college applications require that your counselor complete a Secondary School Report or Counselor Evaluation Form. This form will be automatically included with every transcript mailed. In some cases, a separate recommendation letter from your counselor may also be required. You must also schedule an appointment to discuss your completed questionnaire with your counselor before the recommendation can be written. Plan to deliver **two BA Comment Forms** to the teachers of your choice and have them return these forms **to your counselor**.

_____ **Teacher Recommendation:** Some colleges also require letters of recommendation from your teachers. You can provide the teacher with a **BA Letter of Recommendation Request Form**. This form asks that the teacher write a letter of recommendation for you that will be mailed, by your counselor, to colleges. However, teacher comments are also very helpful for your counselor to include in their letter of recommendation. For this you can use the **BA**

Comment Form. On this form a teacher will provide comments about you to your counselor. The BA Comment Form is for counselor use only and will not be mailed to any college. You should submit one of these forms to the teacher at least **three weeks** in advance. **Students should give the teacher either the BA Comment Form or the BA Letter of Recommendation Request Form. No teacher should be given both forms.**

Section 4: Release of Records and Transcript Request Form (at least 3 weeks before application deadline to Sister Donna Jo.

____ The BA **Release of Records and Transcript Request Form must** be signed by a parent/guardian. No transcript(s) will be sent without a parent/guardian signature on file. The form must be filled in completely to include the type of admissions and the college deadline. Be sure to indicate if the transcript is for a college honors program or scholarship as these dates may differ from the college's deadlines.

____ Submit the completed **BA Release of Records and Transcript Request Form to Sister Donna Jo.** Transcripts are \$4.00 each. Payment is required at the time of your request(s). A late fee of \$5 will be charged for each late request. Late requests are placed at the back of the line and we will do our best to get them done. If the counselor can't complete the request in time for the deadline, the transcript and profile will initially be sent. The counselor information will be mailed separately later.

Section 5: Mid-Year Grades (7th semester reports)

____ In February, mid-year grades will be mailed to all of the colleges to which you have applied.

Section 6: College Acceptance/Notification

____ Once you decide on the college you will attend, submit any deposits or paperwork the college requests directly to the college (by their deadline). If accepted early decision to a college, withdraw your applications from any other college(s) to which you applied. Once you decide on the college you will attend, notify any other college(s) you applied to that you will not be attending. (Appendix G)

____ In May, you **MUST** complete the Senior Survey. You will be asked to indicate the admissions status of the college(s) you applied to and to declare the college you will attend; this is where your final transcript will be mailed in late June. If a college waitlisted you and this is a college you still want to attend if accepted, indicate that a final transcript also needs to be mailed to this college. A final transcript will also be sent to NCAA if it was on your release form.

Appendix B

REQUEST FOR COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION LETTER

To Student:

If you plan to apply to a college that requires a counselor recommendation, you must **complete and submit this form, the Student Self Evaluation, Parent Questionnaire and two BA Comment Forms to your counselor three weeks** before it is due to that school.

I have read and understand the information above. Attached is my completed packet. I request that a recommendation letter be written for me.

Student Signature: _____

Date submitted: _____

Students must submit the following items with this Request for Counselor Recommendation Letter (Appendix B) to your counselor three weeks before the college deadline:

- Student Self Evaluation and Parent Questionnaire (Appendix C)
- **Two** BA Comment Forms (Appendix D).

The Counselor will use the Benedictine Academy Secondary School Report Form. **NO RECOMMENDATION LETTER WILL BE WRITTEN UNLESS REQUESTED MATERIALS LISTED ABOVE ARE SUBMITTED.**

Additional Responsibilities of the Student

You are responsible for delivering and following up with two teachers of your choice about the BA Comment Forms. These requests should be given to your teacher in advance to allow them adequate time to complete and return to counselors as soon as possible.

Students must adhere to the current deadlines for transcript requests and recommendation letters posted in the HS Guidance Office and online.

Appendix C

STUDENT SELF EVALUATION

Directions: Your counselor would like for your letter of recommendation to be an accurate reflection of your history and abilities. Therefore, it is important you answer all questions in detail. You may neatly complete this evaluation by hand or attach a typed copy to this form. Students must complete items 1-13; parents complete 14-19.

Name _____ Date _____

SS # _____ Email Address _____

Post-Secondary Plans:

_____ 4-year college _____ Employment
_____ 2-year college _____ Military
_____ Prep School _____ Technical Training

Career Goal/College Major

Test Scores

SAT _____ SAT Subject _____ ACT _____

ACADEMIC:

1. Is your high school academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? (If yes, why?) (If not, why not? What do you consider the best measure of your abilities?)

2. Describe what you believe are your academic strengths. (List specific characteristics & skills, for example: great writer. Also list specific subjects, for example: English)

3. What is the most important thing that you want the college to know about you?

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

4. Please list all school activities in which you have participated from grades 9-12, including arts, clubs, etc. (A separate sheet may be attached if one has already been prepared for colleges.)

Dates	Activities	Position/Title	Teacher/Advisor
-------	------------	----------------	-----------------

5. What activities and/or organizations have you been involved in outside of school, including employment, volunteer work, etc? Describe responsibilities and incidents relating to these activities that are meaningful to you.

6. What awards, special accomplishments and unique interests, either in or out of school, would you like to highlight?

CHARACTER/PERSONAL TRAITS:

7. List three words that describe you and why?

8. Identify one area of your life that you feel still needs improvement?

9. What subjects are you interested in studying in college?

10. What are your future goals and possible career choice?

11. Explain any family situations or other obstacles that have influenced or affected your high school career?

12. What makes you unique from all the other students at Benedictine Academy Secondary School?

13. Please list the names of the individuals who are completing your recommendation forms. (Reminder: you are responsible for delivering and following up on the teacher recommendations.)

1. _____

2. _____

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents: Complete Questions 14-19.

STUDENT NAME _____ DATE _____

14. Please provide us with some family information that will help us in writing the best letter of recommendation for your child.

Siblings:

Number	Age	Number	Attending College/School Name
Brother(s)	_____	_____	_____
Sister(s)	_____	_____	_____

Living or Current Deceased

	Colleges(s)	Attending	Major	Occupation
Mother	_____	_____	_____	_____
Father	_____	_____	_____	_____

15. What language, other than English, is regularly spoken in your home?

16. Choose five adjectives that best describe your child and explain why?

17. Please describe your student in terms of her achievement in school. What anecdotes can you provide to illustrate the qualities you most admire about her in the school setting? What example would you use to describe your student at her best?

18. Please describe your student as a person. What qualities do you most admire? What anecdote might illustrate your student at their best?

19. What would you like a college admissions officer to know about your student? (This is your opportunity to brag!)

Appendix D
BENEDICTINE ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOL
COMMENT FORM

****This form is for counselor use only and will not be mailed to colleges and/or universities. ****

Student Name:

I hereby waive _____ do not waive _____ my right of access to information contained on this form.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

What are the three (3) words that come to mind in describing the applicant?

1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

In comparison with other college bound students you have known, please rate:

Characteristics

- Unable to Determine
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Excellent
- Outstanding
- One of top few ever encountered

Academic Motivation

Academic Self Discipline

Academic Promise

Leadership Potential

Character & Personal Strength

Maturity

Overall Recommendation

IMPORTANT

Comments: Please provide specific information regarding this **student's performance in your classroom both academically and socially**. You may use bullets or narrative form. We are interested in positive comments that help distinguish one student from another. We are interested in attributes such as: passion, range and depth of understanding, maturity, commitment, growth, self-criticism, leadership, versatility, creativity, goes beyond expected, etc. Thank you!

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Please return this form to my counselor, _____, in the
Guidance Office (C138) by _____ (Date)**

Appendix E

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUEST FORM

Date

Dear _____,

I am requesting that you write a letter of recommendation for me by _____.
Date

I would like:

_____ An all-purpose official letter of recommendation to be sent to all of the colleges and/or universities to which I am applying.

_____ Required forms to be filled out for the following colleges and/or universities listed below. The letter of recommendation may be attached to the college form instead of writing an individual narrative for each college.

When you are finished, please return to my counselor, _____.

OR

If you prefer, you may return them to me in a signed, sealed envelope and I will deliver them to my counselor.

Thank you for your time and effort on my behalf.

Sincerely,

Student Name

Student Signature

Appendix F

BENEDICTINE ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOL RELEASE OF RECORDS AND TRANSCRIPT REQUEST

Transcript requests made 3 weeks or less before they need to be mailed will incur a **late fee of \$5.00 additional per transcript.**

Name _____ Social Security# _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Please Print

Each student is responsible for mailing his/her portion of an application. A transcript packet is mailed from the school. It will include:

- Your transcript, which lists all final grades through the end of your junior year, your grade point average (GPA) and courses in progress.
- College Secondary Report, and counselor recommendation, if requested.
- Benedictine Academy Secondary School Profile.

Important: Benedictine Academy Secondary School **DOES NOT** send test scores. You must request that your SAT and ACT scores be sent directly from the testing program (College Board or ACT).

TURN THIS COMPLETED FORM IN TO Sister Donna Jo.

TRANSCRIPT FEE MUST BE PAID AT THE TIME THE TRANSCRIPT IS REQUESTED. TRANSCRIPTS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED, WITHOUT PRE-PAYMENT. PLEASE ALLOW AT LEAST 3 WEEKS PROCESSING TIME.

Students must complete columns 1-6

I hereby request that Benedictine Academy release the necessary official records of my child to the colleges, service or employers listed above. I understand that there is a \$4.00 charge for payable when the request is handed to Sister Donna Jo.. No records will be forwarded until the fee is paid, even if the deadlines remain unmet. This form must accompany the first request. There is no charge for scholarships.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

***EA – Early Action, ED – Early Decision**

1
**Name of College, NCAA, Military Service,
Scholarship, or Employer**

2
City, State

3
**College Code
(See
CollegeBoard
website)**

4
***EA, *ED
Regular, Rolling
Priority,
Scholarship
(Select One)**

5
**College
Deadline**

6
**Date Given
to
Transcript
Assistant**

7
**Date
Mailed**

8
**Transcript
Assistant's
Initials**

9
**Fee
Paid**

N/C

N/C

N/C

Appendix F

BENEDICTINE ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOL RELEASE OF RECORDS AND TRANSCRIPT REQUEST

*** EA – Early Action, ED – Early Decision**

1

**Name of College, NCAA, Military Service,
Scholarship, or Employer**

2

City, State

3

College Code

(See

**CollegeBoard
website)**

4

***EA, *ED**

Regular,

Rolling

Priority,

Scholarship

(Select One)

5

College

Deadline

6

Date Given

to

Sister Donna Jo

Date

Mailed

8

Transcript

Assistant's

Initials

9

Fee

Paid

Appendix G

SAMPLE LETTERS FOR STUDENTS

Communicating your Interest

Communication is key to a successful search and selection experience. To request information and applications, a telephone call or communication through the Internet (email) is in order. Also, call to arrange campus visits and tours through the admissions office. For the following situations, use either postal standard mail or email. The sample letters below present appropriate responses for some of the many situations you will confront. Adapt the form appropriately for email.

Thank You for Your Visit Letter

Date
Director of Admissions
College or University
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

Thanks you for spending time with me when I visited your campus. I especially appreciated your arranging for me to see (name of activity or interest). The visit increased my interest in (name of school). I am excited about the opportunity to attend (name of school).

Once again, thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Signature
Name and Social Security Number
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Telephone Number

Thank You for the Alumni Interview

Date
Director of Alumnus or Alumna
College or University
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to give me the opportunity to discuss (name of school) and my qualifications for admissions. You were most helpful. Your personal experience has given me a better understanding of why I would like to attend (name of school).

Sincerely yours,
Signature
Name and Social Security Number
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Telephone Number

College Acceptance Letter

Date
Director of Admissions
College or University
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

I am a senior at Benedictine Academy Secondary School in Elizabeth, NJ and was pleased to be informed by your office that I have been accepted for admission in the fall term. I am looking forward to attending (Name of the school). Thank you for your favorable decision.

Sincerely yours,
Signature
Name and Social Security Number
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Telephone Number
Appendix G

Withdrawal of Application

Date
Director of Admissions
College or University
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

I was pleased to be accepted as a student at (name of School/University). However, after much consideration, I have decided to attend another school. Know that this decision was very difficult.

Please withdraw my application and accept my thanks for your help and consideration.

Sincerely yours,
Signature
Name and Social Security Number
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Telephone Number

Confirmation for a Teacher Who has agreed to Write a College Recommendation

Date

Dear _____:

Thank you for agreeing to write a recommendation for me. Here is some information that will help you with this letter.

On the enclosed form, I have listed the names and deadlines of each school needing a copy of your letter and attached an addressed stamped envelope for each. I have also enclosed additional information about my academic and co-curricular involvements.

Again, thank you for taking time to recommend me.

I will be sure to let you know what my status is as soon as I hear.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

Name

Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Sample Cover Letter for Athletes

Date (Spring Junior Year)

Coach's Name

College or University

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Coach _____:

The Benedictine Academy coaching staff recommends that I forward you the attached athletic resume outlining my scholastic and athletic achievements. This year, I am starting Varsity _____ player.

I am very interested in attending your school. A dedicated student, I plan to pursue a degree in Business Administration after graduation.

I would like to discuss with you or your representative the possibility of participating in your athletic program. For your convenience, I have attached the remainder of the _____ schedule as well the complete _____ schedule. I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

Name and Social Security Number

Your Street Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone Number