

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

COLLEGE SELECTION AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Introduction: Congratulations on earning senior status! We hope you have enjoyed your summer and are now ready to return full of energy and enthusiasm for your senior year.

If you have any interest in applying to two or four year colleges for admission this year, there are a number of things you should have already done and/or that you need to do, or think about, very soon. They are defined below, in this handbook. It contains a lot of important information for seniors. Please read it carefully, share it with your parents/guardians and keep it for future reference. If you plan well and do things early you will cut down on your stress. Remember that your best work is rarely thrown together at the last minute. You will want to show your best self in your applications.

1. Take Control of this Process. The college admissions process provides the opportunity for you to learn more about yourself and to decide what is most important to you and your family. It's really all about how a college *fits* you. Think about the following: Why is going to college important to you? How far from home are you willing to be? Are you looking for a particular academic program or environment? How important are the physical location and surroundings? Are you interested in starting at a community college? How important are financial considerations? How much debt are you willing to incur? How important are the characteristics of the student body – diverse, conservative or liberal, religious, traditional, individualistic...? Do you want Greek life (fraternities and sororities) or do you have an aversion to it? What kind of athletic or other extra-curricular experiences are you seeking? Do you need easy access to public transportation? Do you hope to avoid air travel? How important is it that your classes be of a particular size or taught by professors rather than graduate students? Are you looking for a particular type of study abroad program? Would “single sex” education be good for you? Do you need special services of any kind? Is it important to you that your college have a recognized name? You will be able to find the fit you are looking for in colleges that are safe admits for you as well as in good target schools and reaches. You will likely find that you need to prioritize your preferences; this may involve some compromise!

It is important for you to seek help from the college advisor and your guidance counselor. All questions are good questions. None of your classmates has ever gone through this process before so you probably should not count on them to provide answers to whatever questions you have. Explore your options; visit campuses; go to classes; talk to college students and professors; ask about college life, academics, extracurriculars, internships.... Discuss your observations with people who are important to you. You may find that you keep changing and that you are thinking differently next April than you are now. This process of self-discovery and growth can be stressful, but it should also be enjoyable.

You might want to sign up for some free e-mail services to aid you in your thinking about this process.

- The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority at www.mefacounselor.org provides free, short bi-monthly newsletters on college admissions and financing.
- Peter Van Buskirk's free weekly college planning blog at www.theadmissiongame.com/blog/ offers worthwhile commentaries on a variety of timely Topics.

2. Take your academics very seriously this year. Colleges are most interested in your senior year grades. This is your best chance to show that you are ready to do the kind of work that colleges will expect from you. **We will send colleges your transcript and the most recent grade report we have at your time of application. This can be a Progress Reports.** That means if you are applying to colleges with early deadlines or rolling admission, you should start out very strong. In addition, we will send a mid-year report consisting of your first trimester report card and second trimester progress report to all colleges to which you apply, even if you have already been accepted. Strong second trimester grades can come in handy if you find yourself on a waiting list for a college you hope to attend. Seniors truly have no time for procrastination! Early senioritis can make life difficult. Try hard to avoid getting it!

3. Open a Naviance Family Connection account if you have not already done so. Encourage your parents/guardians to do the same. See a Guidance secretary if either you or your parent/guardian needs help with your account. Use this wonderful resource to learn about yourself, careers, colleges and scholarships. Take the

personality and career interest inventories. Investigate recommended careers. Do college searches. Sign up for college visits to ARHS. Request that transcripts and recommendations be sent on your behalf. (See the additional instructions later in this handbook for more information.)

4. Recommendations: Make sure that two teachers have agreed to write recommendations for you. Indicate the teachers who will be writing for you in “colleges/colleges I’m applying to/recommendations/add teacher” in Naviance. Your teachers will upload the letters they write for you. If you have not yet arranged for recommendations, you should do so ASAP. You must initiate this process and follow it through. FERPA release forms for you to complete and give to your recommending teachers are available in the Guidance Office.

REMINDER: Teachers are under no obligation to honor late requests, so remember the magic words, “please” and “thank you.”

The Guidance Office will submit all teacher recommendations that are uploaded to Naviance on or before October 24 for students applying early and by December 12 for students applying under a regular decision program. It is your responsibility to gently remind your teachers to take care of this function. Again, “please” and “thank you” go a long, long, way.

The Guidance Office cannot send letters from anyone who is not an ARHS teacher. If you request a recommendation from an employer, supervisor, college professor, outside coach, private music or dance teacher, clergy person or other adult who has something significant to add to your application, you must provide him/her with stamped, addressed envelopes for all of your colleges.

5. Confidentiality: With Naviance Family Connection every student who will apply to a college that uses the Common Application (including UMass) must complete the **FERPA** (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) statement. Naviance cannot send your letters of recommendation until you do it. You must also give teachers the signed FERPA release on our own paper forms for colleges that do not use the Common Application. Many students apply to both kinds of colleges so be sure to do both tasks. Students who apply only to community colleges do not need to complete the Naviance FERPA form, but they should complete the paper form.

Naviance FERPA instructions:

- a) **Open a Common Application account at www.commonapp.org.**
- b) **In Naviance, under “Colleges/Colleges I’m Applying To,” there is a blue box that contains the FERPA statement. This is where you will provide your Common Application user name and password so that Naviance can connect with your Common Application account.**
- c) **Complete the waiver statement.** (We usually advise that students waive their rights to read their recommendations. Some teachers will not write them unless you do.)

6. Complete the online “Senior Questionnaire for College Conference” under “About Me” at www.connection.naviance.com/amherst. This form provides information we need for advising you and writing school recommendations required by many colleges. It is a long form which can be saved and completed over time. Try to get started on it ASAP. **Meetings with the college advisor will not be scheduled and counselor recommendations will not be written without it.**

Parents/guardians are invited to open their own accounts in Naviance so they can assist you with your college research. They may complete the Parent/Guardian questionnaire for Senior College Conference if they wish.

7. Fall Meeting With College Advisor: Schedule a meeting ASAP with Myra Ross, the college advisor, regardless of how definite or indefinite your post-high school plans are. There are ideas and procedural strategies that should be reviewed to ensure that options will be available to you and that your applications will be properly evaluated. If you are confused about what you want to do after you graduate, this conference may help you in considering the many options you have.

8. College entrance examinations. Check to see what tests are required by the colleges you are considering. The SAT Reasoning test is usually required or recommended, and many highly selective colleges and universities also require or recommend two SAT Subject tests. No American colleges any longer routinely require three subject tests. Consult websites if you are applying to special programs. The ACT may be a good testing alternative for many

students. It can usually be substituted for both the SAT and two SAT subject tests. Again, consult college websites for specific requirements. You can register online with a credit card or a fee waiver for both tests, the SAT at www.collegeboard.com and the ACT at www.ACTstudent.org. Paper registration forms are available in the Guidance Office. If you need SAT help of any kind you can call 1-866-756-7346.

Test Preparation: A free SAT tutorial program called Method Test Prep is available to you through Naviance (under “Colleges”). It is designed to be used one hour per week for each of nine weeks. Of course you can do it much faster. There are two full-length practice tests to take after completing the program. It would be very wise for you to make use of this free preparation opportunity. Plan your study schedule. Do not leave your test preparation for the last minute.

Send your test scores officially: ARHS does not include standardized test scores on transcripts. All scores must be sent directly from the test companies to your colleges and to the NCAA if you are hoping to participate in athletics at either the D1 or D2 levels. Be sure to provide the ARHS school code (220015) or we will not receive your scores and will not be able to share them with colleges if they do not receive them for some reason. We receive SAT scores electronically from the College Board and upload them into Naviance. If your scores are not listed there you neglected to include the ARHS code. Call the College Board to add the code.

SAT scores can be sent free to four colleges at registration or within eight days of test time, or, for a fee, you can send scores any time. Students on free or reduced price lunch are entitled to eight free SAT score reports. Send SAT or ACT scores online from your account.

Score Choice: The College Board uses a Score Choice System. This means that in many cases you will be able to choose the Reasoning or Subject Test scores you wish to send to the colleges to which you are applying. It will not be possible to pick and choose between Reasoning Test sub-scores, but you can select the individual Subject Test scores you wish to send, regardless of the test date. **Similarly, if you take the ACT more than once you can send the scores from whichever test date(s) you prefer.**

Score choice may not always be your best option. It will be most useful in helping you choose between your SAT subject test scores. You will want to send SAT Reasoning Test scores from multiple dates if your highest sub-scores come from different test administrations. Remember that in almost all cases colleges will consider only your highest SAT sub-test scores, so sending all scores is usually the best practice. This is not as universal for the ACT. Consult individual college websites for information about how they interpret the ACT.

Be aware that some highly selective colleges will not accept Score Choice. They will want to see all of your scores. Consult individual college websites or collegeboard.com for a list of those colleges.

Test-optional colleges: Many colleges are now “test optional.” This means that they do not require that you send SAT or ACT scores for admissions consideration. Not all test optional policies are the same. Some colleges require a minimum GPA before tests are optional. Some colleges require subject tests instead of the Reasoning Test or the ACT. Other colleges want samples of written work. Be aware that some “Test Optional” colleges will consider your scores if you send them. Others will consider scores only if they help. Read the colleges’ websites thoroughly, and carefully consider where to send your scores. See www.fairtest.org for a complete list of these colleges. Later in this handbook you will find a condensed list of test-optional colleges to which ARHS students often apply.

Test waivers for students with special needs: Students with documented learning disabilities who have either an IEP or a 504 plan can request that SAT or ACT scores be waived in the admission process AT MASSACHUSETTS STATE UNIVERSITIES AND UMASS CAMPUSES ONLY. You must submit paper copies of your special education diagnostic testing report and your IEP or 504 plan to the college’s admissions office prior to the application deadline. Send both because different campuses prefer different documents. This mailing is your own responsibility. The institution will determine whether a waiver will be granted.

What about testing accommodations? Students with Individualized Educational Plans or 504 plans who use extended time testing or other accommodations at school and who wish to have these accommodations on SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests or the ACT need to apply directly to the testing companies for them. They should see their special education liaison or guidance counselor well in advance of registration deadlines for instructions on how to use the online application for eligibility. The testing agencies make the final determination regarding

accommodations. This can sometimes take several months, so families should begin the application process as early as possible – ninth or tenth grade is best. (Students with IEPs are not required to submit test scores to Massachusetts public universities.)

SAT REGISTRATION DEADLINES FOR THE FALL

NOTE: Register immediately at collegeboard.com if you plan to take the October test. The ARHS test site fills quickly. October, November and December tests are given at ARHS.

| <u>Date of Test</u> | <u>Registration Deadline</u> | <u>Tests</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| October 1, 2011 | September 9 (late 21), 2011 | SAT/Subject Tests | ARHS |
| November 5, 2011 | October 7 (late 21), 2011 | SAT/Subject Tests | ARHS* (see note) |
| December 3, 2011 | November 8 (late 20) 2011 | SAT/Subject Tests | ARHS |
| January 28, 2012 | December 30 (late Jan 13) 2011 | SAT/Subject Tests | Northampton & Private High Schools |

*Language with listening tests on this day only at private high schools.

NOTE: SAT and ACT scores from the October administration will arrive at colleges in time for early decision/action deadlines. The November test scores will arrive in time for early decision/action deadlines at many colleges. December scores are good for regular decision at almost all colleges. January scores are accepted by some colleges. Check your colleges’ websites to be sure.

ACT REGISTRATION DEADLINES FOR THE FALL

Check www.actstudent.org for locations. (The closest sites for the September 10 test are in East Longmeadow or Monson, MA, or Brattleboro, VT). The ACT is never given at ARHS. October and December tests are given elsewhere in the Pioneer Valley.

| <u>Test date</u> | <u>Registration Deadline</u> | <u>(Late Fee Required)</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| September 10, 2011 | August 12, 2011 | August 13-26, 2011 |
| October 22, 2011 | September 16, 2011 | September 17-30, 2011 |
| December 10, 2011 | November 4, 2011 | November 5-18, 2011 |

TOEFL:

Students whose first language is not English (particularly foreign students who are in the U.S.A. on a visa) should consider taking the Internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL IBT) in addition to the ACT or SAT Reasoning and Subject tests. Sometimes, immigrants whose first language is not English also benefit from taking this test, even if you hold American citizenship. If your first language is not English, carefully read the International Students section of websites from colleges to which you plan to apply to see whether you should take the TOEFL. Often this will depend on your SAT Critical Reading score.

Students should prepare carefully and should try to take the TOEFL only once, in the fall of the senior year. It is expensive even with a partial fee-waiver. It is wise to schedule the date a few months ahead of the test date, but a minimum of three weeks is required. Registration and practice materials are available online at www.ets.org/toefl. Students will need to present a letter of identification from the Guidance Office on the date of the test. Follow the online instructions regarding the required identification materials very carefully. There are several Western Massachusetts locations at which students can take the TOEFL. Sign up early for best choice of location. The fee for the TOEFL is \$175. Partial fee waivers are available. The process for obtaining fee waivers is lengthy and complicated and must be completed before you can register. See the secretaries in the Guidance Office ASAP about eligibility and procedures.

9. Fee Waivers: If you are registered for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program you will be eligible for waivers for SAT and ACT registration fees, and partial waivers for the TOEFL registration fee. These cannot be used during the late registration periods except for the October SAT. You will also be eligible for application fee waivers. The savings will amount to hundreds of dollars. All students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program should sign up for it during the first week of school in order to be eligible for a waiver for October tests. See a Guidance secretary for a test waiver once you have signed up for the lunch program. Also see a Guidance secretary for application fee waivers when you are ready to submit them.

10. ARHS APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND FEES

- All parents/guardians (or students over 18) must sign our lime green “Release of Application Materials” form before any information or recommendations can be submitted to colleges. Bring the signed form to a Guidance secretary before September 30.
- We will charge **\$3.00** for each college or scholarship application we send electronically. The fee for each college or scholarship application submitted on paper will be \$5, the \$2 differential to cover the cost of postage for the initial mailing and the midyear and final transcripts. **Please pay by check (payable to ARHS) whenever possible.** If you qualify for free or reduced price lunch, all fees will be waived.
- Most students apply to colleges online. Regular decision deadlines are most often January 1, January 15 or February 1. Over 400 colleges including UMass-Amherst use the Common Application and must accept it as equal to their own application. The Common Application is available online at www.commonapp.org. Consult the Common Application website to learn whether your colleges use it. Some colleges accept their own applications only. **If you are applying to a Common Application school, but are not using the Common Application to do so, you must notify one of the Guidance Secretaries.**
- Seniors will use Naviance Family Connection (connection.naviance.com/Amherst) to request that we send transcripts and recommendations to the colleges to which you are applying this year. We will be sending materials electronically to most colleges. Massachusetts “state universities” and community colleges will not be ready to accept electronic submissions so we will send them paper documents. You will be able to track materials that are sent electronically through Naviance.
- First, register for both Naviance and the Common Application. Consult last January’s e-mail from Naviance Family Connection or see a Guidance secretary if you have not yet registered for Naviance. Remember to record your user names and passwords for both in a safe place.
- Then go to “colleges/Colleges I Am Applying to” in Naviance. An important privacy notice for the Common Application will pop up. Bubble “Yes I do” or “No I don’t” waive my rights to access. (NOTE - Counselors and/or teachers may choose not to give you a recommendation unless you waive the right of access.) Check the box for “I authorize all secondary schools...” Add your **Common Application username and password (not your Naviance user name and password)**. Confirm password and submit. **VERY IMPORTANT -- TYPE SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY TO BE SURE THAT YOU ARE ENTERING THIS INFORMATION CORRECTLY.**
- Read the instructions from college websites for each of your applications **very** carefully. Procedures and deadlines are important and vary from school to school.
- Select your recommending teachers in Naviance under “colleges/colleges I’m applying to/recommendations/add teacher.”
- Request ASAP that we send transcripts and recommendations to the colleges to which you are applying. Do this under Naviance/colleges/colleges I Am Applying to. You must click separately to request the transcript once you have selected a college and an application deadline. **Be sure that you have chosen the correct deadlines for all of your colleges in Naviance. We are deadline-driven in sending your application materials. If your deadlines are missing or incorrect, your materials will likely be sent late. When in doubt about deadlines or when you have a special departmental deadline (audition, portfolio, or as in physical therapy or nursing at some colleges), see a Guidance secretary who will enter the correct deadline. This is entirely your responsibility and is the biggest mistake that students make. It is best to check with a secretary to see that everything is entered correctly if you have any doubt.**
- If your colleges use the Common Application you must also select them on the Common Application website so the electronic connection with Naviance can be made.
- Well over 1500 college applications and transcript requests will be filed by the senior class. Most applications will be due between November 1st and February 1st. In order to do a thorough and accurate job for every student, we need as much lead-time as possible, especially if a counselor recommendation is required. We want to do our best for you so please complete your college questionnaire and make your requests at least **three weeks before**

your application deadline. (Remember if your application is due January 1st, requests must be made by December 1 to allow for the fact that secretaries do not work during the vacation.)

11. Be professional: Colleges will ask you for your e-mail address. They will use it to communicate with you about your application status. We strongly urge you to use a “professional” e-mail address for this purpose; avoid “cute.” Try not to use your school account because the school spam filter has blocked some of these important messages in the past. Also, remember that colleges may call your cell phone if you provide that number to them. Keep your messages professional as well. Of course, be very careful about what is on Facebook about you. Things you think are funny might come back to bite you.

12. Applying Early: Many students will want to submit some of their applications early (late October and November). There are several reasons for this including Early Decision, Early Action, and rolling admission. Students who will apply to out-of-state flagship universities should also apply by November for best chances of admission because these institutions often have out-of-state quotas and have become very popular in recent years. You must inform teachers and Guidance of your early intentions through Naviance ASAP, certainly by early October. **Be sure your deadlines are selected accurately in Naviance. See a Guidance secretary to explain any special deadlines to be sure that the school materials for your applications go out on time.**

Be sure that every document request that you make in Naviance is accurate. If you change your mind before materials are sent, be sure to indicate that change in Naviance. If you delete colleges and then want to put them back, use the “**RESTORE**” feature. See Mrs. Tracy for help if this applies to you.

Pay careful Attention to Deadlines: Each college is different! Some have regular admission deadlines that are similar to Early Decision/Action deadlines. Many merit scholarship deadlines are earlier than regular admission deadlines. Most deadlines refer to the postmark, but a few are “receive by” deadlines. If you have an application with a “received by” deadline, you *must* notify a Guidance Secretary well in advance of the deadline.

If you have a November 1 deadline Please use Naviance Family Connection by October 11 to request that we send your materials to the colleges of your choice. This will ensure that there is adequate time for teachers and counselors to be sure they complete your recommendations and for secretaries to send your materials on time.

A valuable workshop on the early decision process presented by officials from the Amherst College Offices of Admission and Financial Aid will be held on Monday, October 3rd at 2:30 p.m. in the choral room. See the “Deciding to Apply Under an Early Decision or Early Action Program” document later in this handbook for more information about early application programs.

Early Action at UMass: UMASS has a non-binding early action program. If you are considering attending UMass, your SAT score (without writing) is at least 1100, and you have had solid steady grades while in high school with a UMass weighted GPA of greater than 3.3 (add .5 to the numerical equivalent of your ARHS grades for honors classes and 1.0 for AP courses to determine your UMass weighted GPA), why not get your application out early? The deadline to apply is November 1st. If you are accepted, you have until May 1st to accept the offer. If you are deferred, your application will be reconsidered later, and you will know that you need to work hard on your schoolwork and apply elsewhere as well.

- University of California Schools – apply regular decision between November 1st and November 30th, the final application deadline.
- University of Michigan -- “receive by” early action deadline of November 1.
- University of Rhode Island -- Dec. 1st “receive-by” scholarship and early decision deadline. Scholarships are substantial.
- Out-of-state flagship schools - apply before November 1st to ensure priority admission and housing consideration.
- New York State applications – priority deadline – December 1st.
- American University in Washington, DC has a test-optional deadline of November 1st for both early decision and regular decision applicants. After Nov. 1, scores must be submitted
- University of Massachusetts – November 1st for Early Action; January 15th for regular decision.

13. Rolling admission: Students who are applying to colleges with “rolling admissions,” often state colleges and large private universities, should apply as early as possible (November or December). The published deadlines are not target dates. Under “rolling admissions,” admission is offered on a space-available basis, and the program desired can close before the application deadline. Rolling means EARLY!

14. Choose Colleges Carefully: College admission has become very competitive. Unfortunately, many students spend most of their college search time looking at reach schools, and a few that they would consider likely admits. This is one of the biggest mistakes students make. Pay close attention to good target schools, likely admits, and economically safe schools that you would be happy to attend. You might find that you have to choose one of them. Even if your favorite colleges admit you, they might not offer the kind of financial aid you need.

You might want to do your own college searches before meeting with me this fall. This would be especially wise if you have changed your mind about anything since you first met with me. Here are some online addresses at which you can do free searches. They might generate some new ideas.

- www.connection.naviance.com/Amherst This is the service to which our school subscribes, and through which you will ask us to send school materials to your colleges. The site has a career interest inventory in addition to our own surveys. It also has an excellent “advance search” under “colleges” that can help you select appropriate colleges to investigate further and visit. Also look for colleges in the “Groups” section.
- www.collegeboard.com Use the College Match.
- www.petersons.com Click "High School Students;" then "Find a School").

There are many excellent college search books on the market as well. Browse through a book store and fine one or two that seem to speak to you. You might want to purchase different ones than your friends do so you can exchange.

To find likely or safe colleges, look for colleges that have the programs, location, environment, size, majors, activities, and other characteristics that you are looking for, but plug in lower GPA and SAT numbers than those you have earned. Look for merit scholarships, honors programs and other attributes that appeal to you. (See meritaid.com for information about colleges that offer merit scholarships.)

Don't forget about UMass! Read their website. Take a tour and attend an information session. Their Open House will be on Sunday, October 16th. There are many wonderful programs there. Even though it is in your own back yard, it might be a great option for you come spring. **Commonwealth College, the UMass Honors College, is highly regarded nationally. If your UMass GPA is higher than 3.8 and your SAT score without writing is over 1300 or your ACT score is over 29, you may be eligible and should definitely explore the program.**

Selective private institutions seek good geographical distribution in their student body. The implications: You are at some competitive disadvantage in applying regionally, i.e., in the New England States; and conversely, you may have a competitive edge in applying to schools out of this area, especially in the South and Mid-West. (California and Middle Atlantic schools have less difficulty attracting New England students.) Many fine institutions outside of New England can save you money. This can offset travel expenses. Consider Canadian colleges and universities as well.

14. Financial Aid: Unless you are certain that you and your parents will be able to pay for your entire college education regardless of any change that might occur in your family's financial circumstances in the next four years, you should apply for financial aid. Some colleges will not grant aid to anyone who did not apply for financial aid before entering college. Some colleges require the FAFSA in order to consider a student for a merit award.

Beginning this fall, every college is required to have a net price calculator on its website. This calculator should give you a reasonable estimate of the aid you can expect from each institution. Of course the information you input must be accurate, and merit awards for which you are eligible may not be reflected on the calculator, but it can be a helpful tool to use.

For aid-eligibility, all colleges will require you to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov). (A paper version is available for download, but the online version is faster and far easier to amend). The FAFSA is required to get federal Pell grants, Direct Stafford and Perkins loans and work study as well as Massachusetts state grants for Pell recipients. Many private colleges will also require you to file the CSS Profile

at <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp>. Pay close attention to each college's financial aid requirements and deadlines. They are all different, and they are not flexible. Read college websites carefully.

Your first step is to get FAFSA PINs for yourself and a parent from www.fafsa.ed.gov. You cannot complete the FAFSA online without PINs. You cannot submit the FAFSA until January but you can get your PINs earlier. Although PIN creation is now instant, it is wise to plan ahead in case of technical problems! If you find that you are up against a financial aid filing deadline in the winter, you might be very glad you got your PINs in advance!

Most financial aid deadlines are February 1 or 15, but some are earlier. Be sure to complete your forms by your first deadline even if all of your information is not current. You can always amend later. ARHS will host a FAFSA completion event through the Massachusetts College Goal Sunday program on a Thursday evening in late January. Area financial aid experts will help you with your FAFSA. Look for more information in January.

After filing your financial aid forms, check with all of your colleges to be sure that they received the information they require. If a college informs you that you have been selected for "verification," you must also submit your completed, signed tax returns and W2 forms before you can receive a financial package. Many liberal arts colleges "verify" every financial aid application. The federal government requires that colleges randomly verify at least 30% of their applications.

16. Athletics: If you are hoping to participate in Division 1 or Division 2 athletics, you MUST be certified as eligible by the NCAA. Coaches will not talk to you seriously unless they know for certain that you are eligible. To apply for eligibility, go to www.eligibilitycenter.org. You must register, for which there is a fee. Fee waivers are available for students on the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. You may request one when registering with NCAA. **You must notify a guidance secretary that you have requested a waiver in order for it to be processed.**

Registration involves requesting via Naviance that we send your transcript to the NCAA, completing an amateurism questionnaire at the eligibilitycenter website and having your official SAT or ACT scores sent to the NCAA (code 9999). You will also need to complete a second amateurism survey and request that we send your final transcript to the NCAA after you graduate. If you are applying to Division 3 schools only you do not need to register with the NCAA. To get a lot of information about college athletics in general go to naaa.org.

17. Scholarships: Many local businesses and private donors offer scholarship awards to ARHS students. In late February a list of these offerings and a special ARHS scholarship application will be distributed to you and posted in Naviance and on the ARHS website. Some of the scholarship winners are determined by a committee of ARHS teachers and counselors. Other recipients are chosen by the local donors. Many students are eligible for these scholarships as the criteria are designed specifically to honor a wide variety of achievements. Read the information and application instructions carefully and pay attention to our strict April 1 deadline. Please put some effort into completing these applications, as there is quite a bit of money available.

In addition to these local scholarships, the Guidance Department keeps students informed about various Massachusetts and national scholarships. Regularly check Naviance under "scholarships" and request the required documents under "colleges/transcripts/request transcripts for scholarships or athletics" in Naviance. Pay careful attention to morning announcements (also online) to stay up to date about these awards. Deadlines are strict.

Many ARHS students become eligible for tuition waivers at the Massachusetts state universities and UMass campuses by virtue of their MCAS scores. You will receive a letter in the fall if we are informed that you have earned the qualifications for either the John and Abigail Adams or the Stanley Koplík awards.

18. Community Colleges, Associate Degree Granting Colleges and Technical Schools: There are many outstanding and low cost two year schools for general liberal arts or specialized programs, or one year certificate programs for specific professional/vocational interests. Talk with the college advisor about these options. Automatic transfer agreements exist between Massachusetts community colleges and state colleges/universities. Ask about the MassTransfer program. The Tuition Advantage Program at Massachusetts community colleges allows students with a 3.0 G.P.A. at the community college level to receive a tuition discount at the University of Massachusetts or Massachusetts state colleges. Additionally, some private colleges, including Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Cornell and others are actively seeking outstanding students from community colleges.

All students enrolling at community colleges must take a placement test. We highly recommend that students take the Accuplacer practice tests before scheduling the real thing. If a student struggles with any or all of the practice tests, that student should delay taking the test until s/he has had a chance to review. Comprehensive Accuplacer Preparation books are available online at <http://www.mo-media.com/accuplacer/>. We also recommend the following websites for review: <http://www.studyguidezone.com/pdfs/accuplacerteststudyguide.pdf>
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/accuplacer/>
http://www.massasoit.mass.edu/acad_depts/sci_math/math/studyguide.cfm
Students whose first language is not English are encouraged to take the English fluency test before taking the placement test.

19. Specialty Programs: Many colleges have specialized services for students with learning differences (disabilities), for students whose primary language is not English and for students with other needs for specialized services. If you need special services it is a good idea for you to visit the appropriate office at colleges in which you are interested before applying, and certainly before accepting an offer of admission. Discuss your needs for accommodations or special services with the college advisor. See the excellent article later in this packet for more information. Translators for college advising sessions are available upon request.

20. College Fairs:

- **Western New England University** will host a NEACAC college fair Sunday, September 18th, 2011 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the Alumni Healthful Living Center. (Check their website for the list of colleges and directions).
- **The Hampshire County College Fair** will be held on the evening of Tuesday, September 27th, 2011 AT Williston Northampton School in Easthampton, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. Over 150 colleges will attend this event.
- **The NACAC Performing and Visual Arts College Fair** will be held on Wednesday, November 2nd at the Boston Center for the Arts Cyclorama (539 Tremont Street) from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. See <http://www.nacacnet.org/EventsTraining/CollegeFairs/pva/Pages/11PBos.aspx> for more information.

21. College Planning Workshops and Programs at Amherst Regional High School and Amherst Leisure Services. Watch the ARHS Parent Newsletter and the *Amherst Bulletin* for announcements about these important events.

Recently LSSE has begun sponsoring fee-based workshops on the College Admissions process in conjunction with Kaplan Inc. **These are not sponsored by ARHS. Our programs are all free.**

- **SAT Practice Course Through LSSE**
Amherst Leisure Services (LSSE) will offer a six-session course to prepare students for PSAT or SAT Reasoning Test. The course meets from 3:00-4:30 at Amherst Regional High School Tuesdays and Thursdays October 11-27. Call LSSE at 259-3065 to register. The cost is \$135.
- **Athletes and College Recruiting:** Athletic Director Karen Keough-Huff and a panel of experts will explain athletic recruiting procedures and offer suggestions to students hoping to participate in college athletics.
Date: Monday, September 19, 2011, 7:00 p.m.; Location: ARHS library
- **Essay Writing Workshop for seniors:** Offered by the Smith College Director of Admissions, this event is sponsored by Smith College Alumnae Association.
Date: Monday, September 19, 2011, 7:00-9:00 p.m.; Location: Smith College Campus Center, Carroll Room
- **ARHS Workshop for Early Decision/Action Candidates and Parents/Guardians:** Panelists are Amherst College admissions and financial aid experts
Date: Monday, October 3, 2011 (2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.); Location: ARHS Choral Room
- **ARHS College Planning Workshop for Students Whose Primary Language is not English**
Date and Location: T.B.A.
- **ARHS College Admission Night for Seniors and Parents/Guardians:** Panelists are admission and financial aid experts from six area colleges
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2011, 7:00-8:30 p.m.; Location: ARHS Cafeteria

- **ARHS Parent Center "Evening Coffee":** College Advisor Myra Ross will make a presentation and answer questions about the college admissions process. Although this is not exclusively for senior parents, it is an opportunity to ask lingering questions, and it's never too late to get started!
Date: Thursday, November 10, 2011; 7:00-8:00 p.m.:
- **ARHS Financial Aid Workshop for Parents and Students:** College financial aid officials from UMass and Amherst College provide information about financial aid -- completing FAFSA and CSS Profile and more
Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2011, 7:00-8:30 p.m.; Location: ARHS cafeteria
- **FAFSA Completion Workshop:** Local financial aid officers will assist families in completing the FAFSA. Bring W2's and tax returns – leave with an almost completed financial aid application.
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2012 (tentative); Location: ARHS cafeteria

22. Many Paths Workshops at ARHS

The following three workshops will be offered after school as part of the Many Paths partnership college admission series, which was developed collaboratively between an assistant dean of admission at Amherst College, some Amherst College students, the Youth Action Coalition coordinator, the ARHS 21st Century After School program coordinator and the ARHS college advisor. Registration will be necessary. More information to follow.

- **Admission Committee:** be a part of the admission committee at "Good College." Read and evaluate real applications and develop ideas to use in preparing your own materials.
Date: Tuesday, October 25; 3:00-4:15 p.m.
- **Essay Writing:** What makes a good essay and how can you avoid writing one that will not be helpful to your candidacy? This workshop was prepared by an admissions counselor.
Date: Tuesday, November 8, 2011; 3:00-4:15 p.m.
- **College mini-fair:** Hear presentations and then interact with former ARHS students about their college experiences. What are different colleges like? What did the ARHS alumni wish they had known that they did not know?
Date: Tuesday, November 22; 3:00-5:00 p.m.

23. Visiting College Campuses: We urge you to visit as many colleges as you can before applying. This will help you narrow your choices so you don't apply to colleges that you dislike! Check the open house or visit schedule which can usually be found on the admissions page of a college website. Most colleges will ask you to make reservations for your visits and/or interviews. If interviews are offered, try to arrange one. Ask if you can sit in on classes. Take tours and attend information sessions. Eat in the cafeteria. Grab a campus newspaper. Talk to students not working for the Admissions Office. Contact professors in your areas of interest. After your list is narrowed down, you may want to arrange overnight visits so you can stay in the dorm and use campus facilities.

College admissions officials know who has visited and sometimes wonder why someone who easily could have visited did not do so. In fact, some colleges will not accept students who live nearby and do not visit!

24. College Visits to ARHS: Over 100 college representatives will provide group information sessions in the ARHS Guidance Office throughout the fall. Students and parents/guardians are invited to attend. The schedule will be posted in Naviance Family Connection, on our website and in the Guidance Office as it evolves. The school news section of the Amherst Bulletin also lists the meeting times and dates.

Students can sign up to attend college visits through Naviance Family Connection. On the day before the scheduled visit, Reminder notices will be e-mailed to students who sign up or who list a particular college in the "Colleges I'm Thinking About" Section of Naviance. Print this reminder and use it as a pass from class to attend the visit. Have a Guidance secretary sign your pass to prove your attendance. Three proven absences for this purpose are exempt from the ARHS attendance policy.

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

THINGS TO DO IN YOUR SENIOR YEAR

The following is a list of tasks that seniors who are applying to college should complete. The timing will vary somewhat from student to student. Most early decision deadlines are in November. Most regular decision deadlines fall between January 1 and February 15. Most financial aid deadlines are in late January or early February. For the most complete information about programs, deadlines and requirements, consult individual college websites.

September

- Begin to narrow your list of colleges to 5 to 10. Visit as many of these colleges as possible. Attend classes. Make appointments for interviews with admissions counselors or alumni. Schedule overnights at a few colleges that you are considering seriously. Continue this research through November.
- Use (or open) your Naviance Family Connection account (connection.naviance.com/amherst) to do further college and career research. Complete Senior Questionnaire for College Conference. Make appointment for your senior meeting with college advisor. It is wise to meet with her whether or not you had a junior meeting.
- Check in with your counselor and teachers who agreed to write letters of recommendation for you. **Remind them that the letters are due in Naviance on October 24 if you are applying early** and on December 12 if your deadline is after then. Remember to request recommendations in Naviance/colleges/colleges I'm applying to/recommendations/add teacher.
- If you are an athlete planning to continue playing a Division I or II sport in college, register with the NCAA ASAP. (www.eligibilitycenter.org). They will require a fee, official transcript, amateurism questionnaire and SAT scores. Coaches need to be sure you qualify.
- Register in Naviance/colleges/colleges I'm thinking about to attend college visits at ARHS. Choose colleges that interest you. Often these representatives will be reading your application. At least stop by and say hello!
- Develop a plan for fall testing if your colleges require it. The SAT is given in October, November, December and January. The ACT is given in September, October and December. If you are on free or reduced price lunch, see a Guidance secretary to get waivers for testing and college application fees.
- Attend the Hampshire County College Fair (Sept 27) if you are still looking, particularly for safe schools.
- Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - Tests you'll take and their fees, dates, and registration deadlines.
 - College application deadlines.
 - Financial aid deadlines and the forms required. (Note: they are different from application deadlines.)
 - Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.).
 - The ARHS application processing deadlines.

October

- Attend the ARHS Early Decision workshop if applicable, and the College Admission Night for helpful tips.
- Try to finalize your college choices.
- If you are submitting essays, complete first drafts and ask teachers and others to read them.
- After completing the Senior Questionnaire for College Conference, talk to your guidance counselor about writing your counselor recommendation, required by most private and some public colleges.
- Be sure you have an appointment to meet with the college advisor.
- Prepare Early Decision, Early Action, or rolling admissions applications as soon as possible.
- If applying early, request your transcript and recommendations through Naviance and check websites of the College Board or ACT to be sure your test scores were sent.

November

- Use Naviance Family Connection to request transcripts and recommendations at least three weeks before your colleges require them.
- Complete at least one college application by Thanksgiving even if you are not applying early. Remember that many colleges require essay supplements as well as your personal statement. There's a lot to write.
- Attend the ARHS Financial Aid Night for detailed financial aid information.

December

- Remember to keep your grades up. We send your second trimester progress reports to all colleges.
- Be sure that your test scores have been sent officially to your colleges from the College Board or ACT.
- Make sure that all transcripts and recommendations have been requested in Naviance. Check their status.
- Work hard on those applications! Many private college regular decision deadlines are January 1 or 15. As you finish your applications and essays, be sure to print copies before submitting your applications online. Photocopy all print materials you are sending as well.

January

- Complete your applications.
- Encourage your parents to complete the family's income tax forms as early as possible. They will need this information to complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile (if required).
- Get a FAFSA PIN at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- Complete the required financial aid forms. Attend the Jan. 26 ARHS FAFSA completion event if you need help. Financial aid deadlines are usually February 1 or 15, but often earlier. Submit forms by the first deadline even if data must be estimated. Read college websites for deadlines.

February - March

- No senioritis, please! Your college will look at second and maybe third trimester grades.
- Check to see that all application and fin aid forms were received. Supply missing information quickly. Submit forms for fin aid "verification."
- College decision letters will begin arriving. Read them carefully, including any instructions. Recently some colleges have asked for refundable deposits very early. You can request an extension in writing. They are required to grant it. The official Student Reply Date by which you must declare your intentions is May 1.
- Keep active in school. If you are wait-listed and still interested in the college, admissions officers will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and learned of the decision.
- Apply for Local Scholarships

April

- You should receive all acceptance letters and financial aid letters by mid-April. Carefully weigh all possibilities in light of your priorities. Attend the MEFA workshop on making college decisions.
- Enter all admissions decisions in your Naviance account.
- Promptly appeal financial aid offers if necessary and see the college advisor for help.
- Wait-listed by a college? If you would enroll if accepted, tell the college's admissions contact person your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Send strong letters of interest and supporting documentation. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted from the waitlist.
- If you have not done so yet, visit your final colleges before accepting one. As soon as you decide, mark it in Naviance and inform your recommending teachers and your counselor of your choice.
- Planning to defer admission and take a gap year? Most colleges will honor that request, but some will not. Ask anonymously during the admissions process, or directly before accepting an offer of admission. It is rarely possible to defer admission from a college at which you were waitlisted.

May

- Colleges cannot require a deposit or commitment to attend before May 1. By that postmark date, you must inform colleges of your acceptance or rejection of offers of admission and financial aid. Questions? Talk to your counselor or the college advisor.
- Send your deposit to one college only. It is considered unethical to double deposit.
- Work with the college advisor to resolve any admissions or financial aid problems.
- Complete the Graduation Survey in Naviance Family Connection. It gives us permission to send your final transcript to your chosen college.

June

- GRADUATE!!!
- Adapted from College Times® (published by the College Board)

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

College Advising Program Overview

ARHS has a College Advisor who meets with juniors and seniors in classroom groups and individually with juniors and seniors and their parents/guardians. She also plans workshops that provide a comprehensive view of the college admission and financial aid application processes.

The overall goal of the College Advising Program is to help each student and his or her family with major aspects of the college planning and admission processes. In conjunction with school counseling staff and community resources, the college advisor assists students and their families with a broad range of activities including: early college planning; academic preparation for college; identifying appropriate colleges; application and financial aid procedures; essay planning; testing; recommendation requirements; and transition issues.

- College planning strategies are designed to meet the individual needs of each student as he or she explores higher education options. This is done primarily via individual conferences with students and their families that are held during the junior and senior years.
- After-school or evening workshops for students and their parents explore a variety of college admission topics such as early college planning, SAT/ACT preparation, early decision options, essay writing, athletic recruitment, financial aid, services for students with disabilities etc
- The college advisor e-mails group informational “Tidbits” to juniors and seniors and their parents/guardians as needed during the admissions cycle.
- Comprehensive college admission handbooks are distributed to juniors in January and to seniors on the first day of school.
- College admission and financial aid information including the College Collage newsletter is posted on the ARHS website (www.arps.org/hs/offices/guidance/planning) and in Hurricane Highlights.
- Print materials and local newspaper announcements provide supplemental information about the college admission process.

Annual Information Events:

Grade 11: Group Activities

- College fairs: at WNEC in September and at a Hampshire County high school each September/October
- Athletes and College Recruitment panel (with Athletic Director) (every September/October).
- Distribution of the ARHS College Admission Handbook for Juniors (late January).
- Classroom presentations (in science classes) on the college admissions process (early February and early 3rd trimester).
- LSSE sponsored SAT prep held at ARHS (with ARHS teachers) (every February, April).
- ARHS Post High School Planning Workshop for Juniors and Parents (every spring).
- NACAC College Fair at the Eastern States Expo. (every March—for all grades).
- College Admissions Process evening presentation by MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority) (every spring).
- Distribution of teacher recommendation packets (after April vacation-necessary for all juniors who will apply for college admission within five years of graduation).
- Evening panel about college programs for students with learning and other disabilities (every spring – appropriate for students in all grades).

Grade 12: Group Activities

- Distribution of a large college admission handbook on the first day of school. It contains a complete list of college admission and financial tasks for the senior year and information on workshops.
- College fairs: at WNEC in September and at a Hampshire County high school each September/October
- ARHS Early Decision/Early Action Workshop (every September/October).
- Classroom presentations about specifics of applying to college (every September).

- Admission Office outreach visits to ARHS (from Sept.-Dec.).
- Smith Club College Essay Writing Workshop (every September/October).
- Athletes and College Recruitment panel (with Athletic Director) (every September/October).
- LSSE sponsored SAT prep held at ARHS (with ARHS teachers) (every September/October).
- ARHS evening College Admission Workshop for Seniors and Parents or Guardians (every October).
- ARHS College Admission Workshop for ELL students (every October).
- ARHS Financial Aid Workshop for Parents or Guardians of Seniors (every November/December).
- FAFSA completion workshop (late January).
- “Instant decision” sessions at ARHS with HCC and GCC admissions officials (early February).
- Distribution of local scholarship information and application packet to all seniors (late February).
- MEFA presentation on comparing financial aid award letters, decision-making (every April).

Individual College Advising

Grade 11: Individual Meetings

- Individual sessions with the College Advisor are offered to juniors and their parents or guardians from February to June of the junior year reviewing career goals, major areas of study, testing, financial aid, teacher recommendations, interests, extracurricular activities, work experience, summer activities, specific academic or personal needs/preferences, etc. Students are assisted in generating a list of colleges to research during the spring, summer and early fall.
- To arrange an appointment with the College Advisor, students must complete an online questionnaire in Naviance Family Connection and see a Guidance secretary after February vacation.

Grade 12: Individual Meetings

- Individualized college advising sessions are held with all seniors and their parents or guardians from September to early February to assist in finalizing the list of colleges, to provide answers to specific questions/concerns of students regarding applications for admission/financial aid and to ensure that each student includes one or two financially secure options in the final list of schools.
- Students who wish to arrange a senior year appointment with the College Advisor must first complete the online senior questionnaire in Naviance Family Connection. Appointments are made through a Guidance secretary. Guidance counselors also use this information to write letters of recommendation, which are required by most four-year colleges.
- Follow up individual meetings are scheduled with seniors/parents or guardians, as needed to assist with financial aid forms and a wide range of special circumstances.

College Visits to ARHS

Representatives from approximately one hundred colleges visit ARHS each fall. A schedule of these visits is posted on the Guidance bulletin board and on the ARHS website as appointments are made. Students who have a class must inform the teacher in advance. They must bring a college visit pass (generated by Naviance or available in the Guidance Office), to notify the teacher of the planned absence. Parents are welcome to attend. Students can attend three visits without attendance policy penalty.

College Applications: School Portion

Seniors work closely with the Guidance secretaries, who send transcripts, teacher and counselor recommendations, mid-year reports and other documents to the colleges to which the students are applying. Seniors must complete many Naviance tasks including listing colleges to which they will apply and separately requesting transcripts. . If they are applying to Common Application colleges they must also list their colleges on the Common Application at least three weeks before the college application deadlines, and must complete our release form authorizing us to send their materials. We charge a small fee for each application.

Application Deadlines:

Students should make sure that they meet all application deadlines. They are very strict. Students who are applying to colleges with “rolling admissions” (often state colleges and large private universities) should apply as early as possible. The published deadlines are not target dates. Under “rolling admissions,” spaces are offered on a space-available basis, and the program desired can close before the deadline.

Scholarships:

In late February, seniors receive an e-mail PACKET with information on local scholarships and an application form to use to apply for them. This document is also posted on the ARHS college planning website (www.arps.org/hs/Offices/Guidance/Planning) and in Naviance. Some of the winners are determined by a committee of ARHS teachers and counselors. Other winners are chosen by the local donors. Many students are eligible for these scholarships, as the criteria are designed specifically to include a wide variety of needs and achievements. Students and families are encouraged to read the packet of information carefully and pay attention to the strict April 1 application deadline. Students are encouraged to put some effort into completing these applications, as there is quite a bit of money available .

In addition to these local scholarships, the Guidance Department keeps students informed about various Massachusetts and national scholarships. Students should pay careful attention to listings in Naviance and the morning announcements to keep informed about these. Deadlines are strict.

INFORMATION FOR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Amherst Regional High School CEEB/ACT code: 220-015
Amherst Regional High School Address: 21 Mattoon Street; Amherst, MA 01002
Guidance Office FAX number: 413-549-2018

School contact - please list the counselor who is writing your recommendation.

Guidance Secretaries: Cathy Tracy tracyc@arps.org 413-362-1715
Connie Cappelli cappellc@arps.org 413-362-1720

| <u>Counselor</u> | <u>Email</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>Assignment</u> |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Ericka Alschuler | alschule@arps.org | 413-362-1781 | Sh - Z |
| Sherry Balzano | balzanos@arps.org | 413-362-1793 | Me - Se |
| Kelly Cortis | cortisk@arps.org | 413-362-1716 | A – C |
| Peggy Fallon | fallonm@arps.org | 413-362-1712 | Hi – Mc |
| *Maureen Fleming | flemingm@arps.org | 413-362-1756 | assorted |
| Alessandra Mucci-Ramos | ramosa@arps.org | 413-362-1782 | D – Hi |
| Myra Ross | rossm@arps.org | 413-362-1720 | College Advisor |
| Lisa Zephyr | zephyrl@arps.org | 413-362-1784 | assorted |

* Department Head

Date of Graduation for the Class of 2012: June 8th, 2012

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

Naviance Family Connection

ARHS has subscribed to an online research and information management service that will facilitate career exploration and college searches as well as the actual college application process itself. To begin using the program students and parents must use an individualized access code, e-mailed to all students and parents. Seniors should complete college conference questionnaires in Naviance. An optional questionnaire is available for parents.

The Naviance Family Connection website allows students and families to research careers and colleges and to plan your college application process and track your electronic application materials.

The guidance department will send transcripts and teacher and counselor recommendations electronically via the Naviance program to about 1,200 colleges, including all colleges that accept the Common Application. We encourage you to send your applications to colleges electronically. Many colleges are now scanning paper applications and reading them electronically.

To begin using Family Connection, go to connection.naviance.com/Amherst and follow these steps if you have not already done so:

- On the home page, under “new user” enter the code that you received in an e-mail from guidance. See a Guidance secretary if you need another copy.
- Fill out the registration page including your e-mail address and a private password. At the bottom of the page, check the box that you agree to the terms of use and click “Complete Registration.”
- NOTE: When you log-in in the future, your user name is your e-mail address and your password is the one you established when registering. If you change your e-mail address at any point, remember to update it in Family Connection. . Ms. Ross often uses Naviance to communicate important college admission information to you.
- The Welcome page will appear when your registration is accepted. Announcements and other important information will be posted on the Welcome page. Check it often!

Before making your appointment for your individual senior meeting with the College Advisor, you must complete the Senior Questionnaire for College Conference in the “About Me” section.

Following are descriptions of some of the site features:

“ABOUT ME” Tab:

1. Interesting Things About Me:

- **Favorite Colleges:** Generated when you list colleges in the “Colleges” section.
- **Favorite Careers and Clusters:** Generated when you complete activities in “Careers” section.
- **Personality Type:** From the Do What You Are survey for useful information about your personal characteristics. Learn about careers that are matched to you, your personal strengths and blindspots, how you negotiate in your daily life and more.
- **Resume:** Provide information about your accomplishments and talents, and help us get a better understanding of how to help you effectively describe yourself to colleges.
- **Journal:** Place to chronicle your thoughts and questions.
- **Checklist:** Status of your surveys and questionnaires
- **Completed Surveys:** Lists any completed surveys. Click on the name to view your responses.
- **Upcoming College Visits and entire Visit Schedule:** College admission representatives visit ARHS in the fall to meet with interested students. To see which colleges have scheduled visits, click here. Click on “sign up” next to the college name to receive an e-mail reminder of the upcoming visit.
- **Documents**

2. Official Things:

- **Account:** If you would like to change your password, you can do so here.
- **Profile:** Includes basic biographical data and grade point averages.
- **Test Scores:** ARHS loads them electronically but you can add them before we get them.

“COLLEGES” Tab

My Colleges:

- As you find colleges that interest you, add them to your list of **“Colleges That I’m Thinking About”**. If one of your colleges of interest visits ARHS, you will automatically receive an e-mail alerting you to the date/time of the visit.
- As you apply to colleges, you will request that your school materials be sent to colleges and track the status of your applications under **“Colleges I’m Applying To”**.
- **Upcoming college Visits and entire Visit Schedule:** See above.
- **College Research:**
- **SuperMatch College Search**
- **College Search:** Conduct a college search anytime. Answer questions regarding your priorities and preferences. If you don’t like the result, try again. If you end up with too many schools and need to narrow your list, select more factors. On the other hand, if you end up with too few schools, deselect some factors.
- **College Lookup:** Research any college here. Visit links to individual college websites for current information.
- **College Resources:** A listing of quick links on many pertinent college topics

“CAREERS” Tab:

- **What Are My Interests:** Find personality type survey, career interest inventory, and career cluster finder which relate careers to your interests and personality.
- **Explore careers.** Get information about thousands of careers.

If you are applying to colleges using the Common Application, you MUST take the following steps:

1. Go to the Common Application web site. (www.commonapp.org)
2. Click on “Never Registered.” Register. Remember to write down your username and password and keep them in a safe place.
3. Open your Naviance account (see above). On the left side of the screen are multiple tabs. First go to my colleges. An important privacy notice for Common Application will pop up. Bubble “Yes I do” or “No I don’t” waive my rights to access. (NOTE - Counselors and/or teachers may choose not to give you a recommendation unless you waive the right because letters of recommendation are confidential.) Check the box for “I authorize all secondary schools....”. Carefully enter your Common Application username and password. Confirm password and submit.

REVIEWING AND SELECTING COLLEGES

Use the tabs under College - college search, college look up, college match, college compare, scattergrams, maps, acceptance history to search for colleges and learn important information about colleges, majors, acceptance criteria etc. For each college you can look at admissions criteria (average SAT scores, GPA, % of applicants accepted). You will eventually be able to look at how many Amherst students applied last year with GPA and SAT /ACT scores, and what the admissions decisions were.

APPLYING TO COLLEGES

The next step when you are ready is to move colleges from the “Colleges I’m Thinking About” to “Colleges I’m Applying To.” As you type in a college you are applying to, you can request a transcript and a midyear transcript. Click the “add college to list” button.

Choose your recommending teachers from the drop-down list on the “Colleges I’m Applying to” page.

Your teacher and counselor recommendations and your transcript will all be sent electronically to most of your schools. Paper materials will be sent to those colleges that do not accept electronic document transmission, but you can submit your part of almost every application online. Massachusetts “state universities” and all community colleges will not accept electronic institutional materials, but they will usually accept online applications from students (except sometimes when a fee waiver is used). All UMass campuses will accept all materials electronically.

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

FINANCIAL AID OVERVIEW

Resources:

Beware of any websites or financial aid counseling services that charge you for financial aid or scholarship information. Everything you need to know is available free. There are many scams out there.

MEFA, the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority, provides free, credible and comprehensive information about college financing, as well as a financial aid calculator and links to many important financial aid websites. You can sign up for free timely reminder e-mails and get other information at <http://www.mefacounselor.org/>.

Try <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/> for a prediction of your federal aid eligibility.

The College Board website has a lot of helpful information, a financial aid calculator and a scholarship search. www.collegeboard.com. Click on the Paying for College icon.

College websites provide aid deadlines, policies and procedures. They must now have a net price calculator on their website. It will provide a reliable prediction of financial aid when you enter accurate data. . Once you know you are applying to a particular college, carefully read everything posted.

Other helpful financial aid/scholarship websites are: www.finaid.org; www.studentaid.ed.gov; www.fafsa.ed.gov; www.fastweb.monster.com; www.MeritAid.com; www.GetCollegeFunding.org.

Questions to Ask:

1. **Is the college “need-blind” in its admission policy?** A college that is “need-blind” makes admission decisions without regard for the student’s ability to pay. The “need-blind” college does not review the student’s financial circumstances until after an admission decision is reached. There was a time when most colleges were “need-blind,” but this is much less common now. Some colleges, when considering students with equal academic records who are “on the cusp” of acceptance, will give preference to the student who is able to pay. This practice is “need aware” or “need conscious.” You should ask what the policy is for each school you are considering.
2. **Does the college meet 100% of demonstrated need?** To be eligible for financial aid a student (parent) completes several forms (see descriptions below) and a determination is made regarding a family’s economic need. Some schools meet 100% of your demonstrated need with an aid package that includes grants (scholarships), student loans and work-study. Other schools do not meet full need. This is called “gapping”.
3. **What is the college’s “packaging policy”?** Most schools give an aid package that includes grant money (scholarships), loans and/or work study. Ask the following questions:
 - a. **In general, what percentage of an aid package is grant vs. self-help (loans, work-study)?**
 - b. **How does an aid package change over four years?** Some colleges entice freshmen with large grants for the first year and then switch to a much heavier loan burden in sophomore and subsequent years. Some increase in loans over a four year period is typical, but you want to avoid a “bait and switch” situation.
 - c. **Is there a “preferential packaging” policy?** -- e.g. If two students have equal demonstrated financial need, does the student with a stronger academic profile receive more grant aid or a better overall aid package? Does the college give better aid packages to students entering certain fields of study? Are aid offers comparable under early and regular decision programs?
 - d. **Does the college give any type of merit-based aid (scholarships for students with high academic profiles regardless of their family’s financial circumstances)?** How many? What are the criteria for these awards? How does one apply?

- e. **What is the college's policy regarding outside scholarships?** Most schools deduct money earned in outside scholarships from your financial aid package. Some schools reduce your loan burden, but other schools reduce your grant. Obviously, reducing the loan would be more favorable to you!

General Advice:

1. Plan ahead! Read all materials from colleges regarding financial aid policies and procedures. Note and comply with all deadlines.
2. Try to make an appointment to meet with a financial aid administrator when you visit a college (in addition to admission officials). Establish a relationship with an aid officer for advice on special programs, tuition plans, loan or payment programs that might benefit you. Some fin. aid administrators may give you a projected aid package if you bring a copy of your most recent tax form with you. They have more time in the summer and fall. Prepare questions ahead. Take notes.
3. **Complete your federal income tax form early, and then complete your fin. aid applications ASAP to ensure your aid will be packaged accurately. Do not miss a financial aid deadline.**
4. **If you are selected for "verification," you must comply ASAP or you will jeopardize your aid package. . The federal government requires colleges to request W2 forms and signed income tax forms from at least 30% of applicants. Many liberal arts colleges verify all applications for aid.**
5. In April of the senior year, when you have all of your financial aid awards, make sure that you know the bottom line, not just the award amounts. Remember that certain loans are considered to be financial aid, but you have to repay them. Learn about future monthly loan payments. Know the total cost of attendance at each school (room, board, tuition, fees, transportation, personal expenses, books...). You must have consistent information to compare offers. Visit mefacounselor.org or www.collegeboard.com for helpful aid comparison worksheets.

Types of Financial Aid Forms:

Find out which forms are required and note the filing deadlines. They are different from admission deadlines and are **not** flexible. (Early decision candidates usually need to complete a CSS Profile or Institutional form.)

1. **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** – All colleges require this. It determines eligibility for all forms of Federal Aid, including loans, and the Massachusetts state scholarship program. File the FAFSA online (after January 1st and before your earliest financial aid deadline). First register for a personal identification number (PIN at www.fafsa.ed.gov). Both the student and the parent will need a pin number. Individual FAFSA-completion assistance will be available at ARHS in late January. Watch for details.
2. **The CSS (College Scholarship Service) Financial Aid PROFILE** – Many private colleges, some scholarship programs and a few public colleges require this form. It is accessible online only, at collegeboard.com. There is no paper version. Check individual college websites and the list on the Profile website to see which colleges require this form. There is a fee for filing the Profile, but most low income families get a fee waiver automatically upon submitting the form online. Make sure you meet all deadlines.)
3. **Institutional Forms** – Some colleges have their own aid forms in addition to those listed above. Check each college website, and follow the instructions.

FINALLY:

1. If you think you may need aid at any time while in college, apply! Some colleges do not ever offer aid if students did not apply as a freshman. Some scholarship and low interest loan programs require the FAFSA.)
2. Students who need significant amounts of aid should remember that some schools give larger aid packages or merit-based aid to good students. Keep those grades up!
3. Make sure your list of colleges includes an economic safety school – one that you are willing to attend that meets your academic needs and is affordable. For many students this is a state university or community college.
4. Financial aid officers at Western Mass. colleges have been helpful to Amherst parents in answering specific questions about financial aid. You may contact these offices for help at any time for free assistance.

A AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

Reprinted from the website of the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority

College policies for awarding merit-based aid, or scholarships, will vary greatly from campus to campus. Families should ask specific questions to understand and compare merit-based awards.

1. Is the scholarship renewable for all four years?
2. What governs whether or not the scholarship will be renewed?
3. Will my scholarship be affected if I receive additional local scholarships from my community? What is the college's policy on this issue?
4. If I lose my scholarship for an unsatisfactory academic performance, can it be re-instated if my GPA improves?
5. If my family's financial situation changes over the next couple of years, will the scholarship amount be changed?
6. If I don't receive merit aid in the first year, will I have the opportunity to be considered for it in future years?
7. Do I need to apply for financial aid each year in order to continue to be considered for merit aid?
8. If I qualify for additional need-based financial aid in future years, will my overall financial aid award be adjusted accordingly?
9. If I defer admission for a year, or take a year off after beginning enrollment, will I lose the scholarship?
10. Can I continue to get the scholarship if I do a study-year abroad at another college or university?

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

What's on the Web?

- **The Admission Game**.....www.theadmissiongame.com/blog/index.php
Free blog by the author of [The Admission Game](#).
- **The College Board** www.collegeboard.com
Excellent collection of information. Allows you to calculate ballpark figure for expected parent contribution. Online CSS PROFILE. Free SAT Learning Center. College and scholarship search. Practical advice on the college application process.
- **Cappex.com**..... www.cappex.com
Create a profile to find your college match. Get messages about unique college opportunities. Instantly learn your chances of being admitted to almost any college in the country. It is free.
- **College View** www.collegeview.com
Profiles of 3500 colleges. Allows you to search by name, size of school, location and special programs, including Study Abroad.
- **College is Possible**..... www.collegeispossible.org
This site, put together by a collection of colleges and universities, is full of information on preparing for, paying for and choosing the right college.
- **Campus Tours** www.campustours.com
This site links you to virtual tours, interactive campus maps, webcams, videos, and campus pictures of hundreds of U.S. colleges and universities.
- **College For You: Your Million Dollar Decision** www.collegeforyou.org
Project that aims to provide Latino parents and students with information to prepare for college admission and attendance.
- **College Navigator** <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>
Offers information about colleges and universities. Get data from the National Center for Education Statistics on expenses, aid, enrollment, admissions and graduation rates, majors, along with a Google map pinpointing location. Export data into Excel.
- **College PowerPrep** www.powerprep.com
Free SAT and ACT preparation.
- **College ToolKit**..... www.collegetoolkit.com
Comprehensive scholarship search and college information site, free.
- **CollegeWeekLive.com** www.CollegeWeekLive.com
Virtual Booths for 200+ colleges and universities, Live video presentations from college admissions experts, Chats with current college students discussing their school experience Archive and live (next live Nov. 12,13)Registration is free.
- **Enrichment Alley** www.EnrichmentAlley.com
Contains information and links to sites about programs that enhance education during the school year and summer.
- **FAFSA4caster Federal government site**..... www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov
Provides instant calculation of an estimated EFC, early information about student's potential to receive a Federal Pell Grant, automatic transfer of student information to reduce time needed to complete the FAFSA during senior year.
- **FAFSA On the Web**..... www.fafsa.ed.gov
This site provides the form you must complete in order to receive federal student aid as well as links to a list of codes, worksheets, the FAFSA Forecaster (official US government federal aid calculator), their PIN website and more. You can submit the FAFSA online (or by mail if necessary) after January 1st of the senior year. Both parent and student must register for pin numbers first.
- **Fafsa On Line**
www.FAFSAonline.com Helpful site for completing the FAFSA. It contains text and audio tutorials and helpful hints.
- **FastWeb Scholarship Service** www.fastweb.monster.com
Database of 180,000 private scholarships. Free search using online profile.

- **Federal Student Aid Gateway**..... www.fsa.ed.gov
U.S. Dept. of Education Federal Student Aid Gateway: comprehensive site containing links to publications and informational sites and the FAFSA.
- **Financial Aid Info Page** www.finaid.org
A wealth of information, tips, and special topics.
- **Financial Aid PodCast** www.FinancialAidPodcast.com
A publication of the Student Loan Network. Full of useful tips and advice.
- **Get College Funding** www.getcollegefunding.org
Comprehensive financial aid site, clear explanatory tutorials, EFC calculator, financial aid statistics for many colleges
- **Higher Education Information Center** www.heic.org
Education/career counseling and FA information.
- **International Student sites about funding:**
 - <http://www.InternationalStudent.com>
 - <http://www.InternationalScholarships.com>
 - <http://www.IEFA.org>
 - <http://www.InternationalStudentLoan.com>
- **Massachusetts Colleges On Line**..... www.mco.mass.edu
This site contains listing of online state college and community college (not UMass) courses, many of which are open to high school students. Fees are charged. This can be a good way for students to expand their horizons and try college work.
- **MEFA Counselor** www.MEFAcounselor.org
Best site for one-stop shopping. An excellent comprehensive site about the admissions process, financial aid, loans, debt management, includes calculator, parent-email sign-up and links to many important sites.
- **MeritAid.com** www.MeritAid.com
The first comprehensive Web site dedicated to helping students, parents and counselors discover merit aid scholarship opportunities nationwide. It is free.
- **National Association for College Admissions Counseling**..... www.nacacnet.org/MemberPortal/ForStudents/
Multiple resources on all aspects of the college admissions process.
- **NCAA Eligibility Center** www.ncaaclearinghouse.net/NCAA/student/index_student.html
Students planning to participate in Division 1 or 2 athletics must register here. This site also contains a guide that lists eligibility and core-course requirements, plus recruiting regulations, graduation rates for athletes and academic support services available at colleges.
- **National Center for Education Statistics** necs.ed.gov/collegenavigator
This site contains data about individual colleges.
- **SAT Prep Program** www.number2.com
An online free SAT prep program.
- **Student Scholarship Search** www.studentscholarshipsearch.com/
A useful guide for parents and students who need help searching for scholarships to pay for college.
- **US Department of Education** www.ed.gov
Click on student financial assistance. Site includes FAFSA online; school code search.
- **Yahoo Financial Aid Search** www.yahoo.com/education/financial_aid
Links to financial aid office web pages plus various searches.

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

Deciding to Apply Under an Early Decision or Early Action Program

What is Early Decision?

Most private colleges and some public universities have an early decision plan. Under this plan a student submits his or her credentials early, usually by November 1st or November 15th, and signs a binding statement that he or she will accept the college's offer of admission. Some colleges also have Early Decision 2, with application deadlines in December or January and notification dates that are earlier than those for regular decision. Students can have only one early decision application active at a time.

Students who are accepted under early decision programs **must** attend that college and **must** withdraw all other applications.

Who Should Apply Early Decision?

- Students who have researched colleges extensively, visited many colleges (likely including overnight stays and attending classes at their first choice college), and who are **absolutely sure** about their first choice.
- Students who also meet or exceed the admission profile of accepted students at their selected college, i.e. applicants with SAT Reasoning/Subject scores and G.P.A. that are similar to those of accepted students at their chosen college. (Students should have completed one round of SAT testing by October of their senior year. Most colleges will accept November scores for early decision. Consult college websites or ask them in advance.)
- Students who also have an academic record that has been consistently solid over time. (If you know that your senior year grades will indicate improvement, you may fair better under regular decision.)
- Students who also do not need to compare financial aid packages in order to make their choice.

What are the Advantages of Early Decision Programs?

- Your application is reviewed early and you receive notification of your admission status by December 15th.
- If you are accepted, you avoid having to complete other applications.
- Your application is reviewed against a smaller applicant pool.

What are the Disadvantages of an Early Decision Program?

- If financial aid is important to you, you might want to be able to have additional colleges with possibly better financial aid packages to consider. Comparable colleges often offer very different packages, depending on their resources.
- Students often grow and change during the senior year. You might discover other attractive options, but you would be bound by contract to attend the college you chose.
- Students accepted early might have a false sense of security and could develop "terminal senioritis."

What Are Some of the Mistakes Students Make in Choosing an Early Decision Program?

- Applying to a "reach" college early without researching or visiting any other schools.
- Applying to a college early just because the odds of admission might be higher.
- Applying early to a college just to avoid extra paperwork and stress.
- Applying early to a college because a friend is doing so.

- Assuming you will be admitted and not developing a strong back-up plan by early December
- Not preparing required essays for applications to other colleges.

What is Early Action?

Some colleges have Early Action programs similar to Early Decision in that you apply early to your college of choice (and to other colleges, if you wish). You will receive a decision early in the admission cycle (usually by December 15th or early January). Unlike Early Decision, you are not required to attend the college, and you can wait until May 1st to make your final decision. There is almost no disadvantage in applying under an early action program.

What is Single-Choice Early Action?

A few colleges (Yale, Stanford...) have Single-Choice Early Action. It is the same program as regular Early Action, but you are not allowed to submit any other Early Action or Early Decision applications.

What should you do if you are deferred under an early program?

- Don't Panic! You were deferred – not denied. Of course, it is disappointing when you are not accepted right away, but colleges will reconsider you during the regular decision cycle.
- Call the admission office; speak to an admission counselor and ask for feedback on your application:
 - a. Ask what new information or materials the admission staff would like to see for your second review.
 - b. Ask about the percentage of deferred candidates that are later accepted during the regular decision process. (Colleges differ in this category. You need to get a realistic picture of your status.)
- Take Action with that college:
 - a. Keep the name of your admission counselor and write a follow up letter indicating your continued interest, mentioning any new academic or extracurricular experiences since you applied. Express your appreciation for the feedback you received, as well.
 - b. Provide documentation of new academic or extracurricular ventures. Submit additional writing sample, tape, or piece of artwork, etc. if the college has expressed an interest.
- Try to liberate yourself from your fixation on the school that deferred you. Research and review your other college choices, especially your safe schools. Many early decision candidates are surprised to discover what other campuses have to offer, because they have focused too narrowly on one school. Believe it or not, some students choose other schools in the end after being accepted at their original first choice.
- Keep your grades up. Do not drop courses or let things slide. We will be sending second trimester progress reports in early February and final transcripts in June. Grades are the top factor in college admission.

What About Financial Aid?

When applying under an early decision program, you will fill out a preliminary financial aid form from the college. (Some colleges use the CSS Profile form available via the Internet at www.collegeboard.com.) You will be notified of your estimated financial aid package at the time of your acceptance. It will be determined by the college based on an assessment of your family's economic needs, and will be adjusted after you provide your actual FAFSA and tax returns.

Under an early action program you are not likely to be granted a financial aid package before your FAFSA and all other necessary forms have been processed, likely in March.

Questions?

It is always best to direct your questions about early decision or early action programs to your college of choice. Institutions vary in their implementation of early programs. Contact the colleges directly about the regulations of each program, as they vary widely. Consult college websites first. They usually have the most current information.

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

Test Optional Colleges

The colleges named below are SAT/ACT Optional, meaning that they minimize or eliminate the importance of standardized tests in the admissions process. ARHS students regularly apply to these colleges, which are excerpted from a longer list at www.fairtest.org. That website also contains many religious colleges, art schools, music conservatories and many state campuses. Consult the website for the complete list. Some colleges will consider scores if you send them and others will ignore them if they do not enhance your application. Visit websites from individual colleges to learn more about their test-optional policies.

Key:

3 = SAT/ACT used only when minimum GPA and/or class rank is not met

4 = SAT/ACT required for some programs

5 = SAT/ACT not required if submit SAT Subject

Test, Advanced Placement, Int'l Baccalaureate or other exams.

- American University, Washington, D.C. (for ED and RD applicants who apply by Nov. 1)
- Assumption College, Worcester, MA
- Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
- Bates College, Lewiston, ME
- Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Boston, MA
- Bennington College, Bennington, VT
- Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME
- Bryant University, Smithfield, RI
- Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA: 5
- Cazenovia College, Cazenovia, NY
- Colby College, Waterville, ME: 5
- Colby-Sawyer College, New London, NH
- Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO: 5
- College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, ME
- College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA
- Columbia College, Chicago, IL
- Connecticut College, New London, CT; 5
- Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY
- Curry College, Milton, MA: 4
- Denison University, Granville, OH
- DePaul University, Chicago, IL
- Dickinson College, Carlisle, A
- Drew University, Madison, NJ
- Earlham College, Richmond IN
- Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT
- Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY
- Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA
- Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA
- Goucher College, Baltimore, MD
- Green Mountain College, Poultney, VT
- Guilford College, Greensboro, NC
- Hamilton College, Clinton, NY5
- Hampshire College, Amherst, MA
- Hartwick College, Oneonta, NY: 4

- Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), New York, NY
- Johnson and Wales University, Providence, RI, Miami FL, Denver CO, Charlotte NC
- Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA
- Knox College, Galesburg, IL
- Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL
- Lawrence University, Appleton, WI
- Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR
- Long Island Univ.: Brooklyn Campus, Brooklyn, NY: 4
- Loyola University Maryland, Baltimore, MD
- Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY
- Marist College, Poughkeepsie, NY
- Marlboro College, Marlboro, VT
- McDaniel College (Western MD College), Westminster, MD3
- Merrimack College, North Andover, MA
- Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT: 5
- Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
- Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
- Nazareth College, Rochester, NY
- New England College, Henniker, NH
- New England Institute of Technology, Warwick, RI
- New School, New York, NY: 4
- New York University, New York, NY: 5
- Newbury College, Brookline, MA
- Nichols College, Dudley, MA: 3
- Pitzer College, Claremont, CA 3
- Prescott College, Prescott, AZ
- Providence College, Providence, RI
- Rollins College, Winter Park, FL
- Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT
- Saint John's College, Annapolis, MD; Santa Fe, NM
- Saint Lawrence University, Canton, NY
- Salve Regina University, Newport, RI
- Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY
- Simon's Rock College of Bard, Great Barrington, MA
- Smith College, Northampton, MA
- Southern NH University, Manchester, NH
- St. Anselm College, Manchester, NH
- St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT
- Stonehill College, Easton, MA
- Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA
- Union College, Schenectady, NY
- Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA:
- Utica College of Syracuse University, Utica, NY: 4
- Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, NC
- Washington & Jefferson College, Washington, PA
- Wheaton College, Norton, MA
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

LUCKY THIRTEEN MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

1. Applying to too many highly selective schools and not adequately researching likely (target) and economic safety schools. Diversify your applications. There are schools that are a good fit for you in each category. Protect yourself -- be sure you have a college you like at which you will be admitted and which you can afford.
2. Forgetting to send official copies of your standardized test scores directly from the ACT or College Board to each college on your list. ARHS does not send standardized test scores to colleges.
3. Making Naviance errors -- Not listing your recommending teachers, not completing the FERPA statement, not also listing your colleges on the Common Application, making typing errors, selecting the wrong deadlines. **We are deadline-driven in sending your application materials. If your deadlines are missing or incorrect your materials may be sent late. When in doubt about deadlines or if you have a special deadline see a Guidance secretary to enter the correct deadline.**
4. Missing the college's financial aid deadline (It may be earlier than the admission deadline!) or failing to apply for financial aid if you may need it at any time during your college years. Meeting the deadline is of paramount importance. Data can be updated later, ASAP.
5. Believing that pressing "submit" ends your application process. Students must frequently check the e-mail address they provide to colleges or must check their college online accounts using the PIN provided by the college. Failure to respond to communications from Admissions or Financial Aid Offices can cause denials of admission or financial aid.
6. Assuming that a coach can get you into a college regardless of whether your grades and test scores are competitive there. Remember, admissions officials admit students. Ask an interested coach to get a read on your admissions prospects from the admissions office. If it looks good talk to the coach and financial aid office to learn as much as you can about what it will cost you to attend.
7. Paying for a scholarship/financial aid search service. We recommend free websites -- finaid.org, fastweb.com, meritaid.com or collegeboard.com for scholarship information. Complete the FAFSA at fafsa.ed.gov, NOT at fafsa.com, which will charge you \$85 to complete the free form.
8. Dismissing schools that are outside the New England/East Coast areas as unacceptable because they don't have name recognition in this region.
9. Judging a college or university on the basis of the tour guide's personality, the weather, or a friend's positive/negative experience.
10. Thinking that a great interview, high SAT scores, a letter from someone in high places, etc., can compensate for a weak transcript.
11. Not understanding that improvement in the junior and senior years is very important. Colleges require transcripts, progress reports and report cards during the senior year, and look for the trend in grades.
12. Overlooking the rich and diverse academic opportunities available at UMass, Massachusetts state universities, and community colleges.
13. Forgetting to photocopy or to print each completed application before sending or submitting it to a college.

AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM

Important Dates for Seniors 2011-12

Below is a list of deadline and special event dates that are very important for seniors. Register for required tests, and attend events that have been designed to support you through the college and financial aid application processes.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| September 9 | Registration deadline for October 1 SAT with no late fee |
| September 10 | ACT (not at ARHS) |
| TBA | College Planning Workshop for Students Whose Primary Language is Not English: 2:30 p.m.; ARHS – Room 172. |
| September 16 | Deadline to register for October 22 ACT with fee waiver or no late fee |
| September 18 | Western New England University NACAC college fair; Springfield; 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.; Alumni Healthful Living Center. |
| September 19 | Smith College essay-writing presentation; Campus Center Carroll Room; 7:00-9:00 p.m. |
| September 19 | Athletes and College Recruiting Presentation; 7:00 p.m.; ARHS library. |
| September 20 | Early applicants should have appointments with the college advisor for planning, and guidance counselor regarding the required recommendation. |
| September 21 | Registration deadline for Oct 1 SAT with fee waiver |
| September 27 | Hampshire County College Fair; 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.; Williston Northampton School, Easthampton, Athletic Center. |
| September 30 | Signed lime green release forms due in Guidance. |
| October 1 | SAT; ARHS; registration deadline Sept. 9, Sept 21 with fee waiver |
| October 3 | Workshop for Early Decision/Action Candidates and Parents/Guardians; 2:30– 3:30 p.m.; ARHS Choral Room. |
| October 5 | Naviance and college applications; required presentation; C-period 9:00 a.m.; auditorium |
| October 7 | Registration deadline for November 5 SAT with fee waiver or no late fee |
| October 8 | Deadline to register LSSE (259-3065) for SAT Prep 6-week course Oct. 11-27; ARHS. Fee: \$135 |
| October 11 | Requests for school portion of applications (transcript, recommendations) must be in Naviance for November 1 st college deadlines. |
| October 11-27 | LSSE SAT prep class taught at ARHS by ARHS faculty. |
| October 13 | College Admissions Night; important professional panel presentation for Seniors and Parents/Guardians; 7:00– 8:30 p.m.; ARHS Cafeteria. |
| October 16 | UMASS Open House for High School Seniors. 9:30 a.m.; Mullins Center. |
| October 22 | ACT; registration deadline Sept 16 with fee waiver or no late fee |
| October 24 | Teacher recommendations due in Naviance for students applying before December 1. |
| October 25 | Request for school portion of application (transcripts, recommendations) must be in Naviance for November 15 th college deadlines |
| October 25 | Many Paths admission committee workshop; 3:00-4:15 |
| November 1 | All 4-year college applicants should have appointments with the college advisor for planning, and your guidance counselor regarding your required recommendation. |
| November 2 | Boston NACAC Performing and Visual Arts Fair: 6:00-8:00 p.m.; Boston Center for the Arts Cyclorama (539 Tremont Street). |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| November 4 | Registration deadline for December 10 ACT with fee waiver or no late fee |
| November 5 | SAT; ARHS; registration deadline Oct 7 with fee waiver or no late fee |
| November 8 | Registration deadline for December 3 SAT with fee waiver or no late fee |
| November 8 | Many Paths essay writing workshop 3:00-4:15 |
| November 10 | Request for school portion of application (transcripts, recommendations) must be in Naviance for December 1s ^t college deadlines |
| November 15 | ARHS Financial Aid Night professional presentation; 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.; ARHS Cafeteria. |
| November 22 | Many Paths fair; 3:00-5:00 |
| November 28 | Request for school portion of application (transcripts, recommendations) must be in Naviance for December 15 th college deadlines |
| December 1 | Request for school portion of application (transcripts, recommendations) must be in Naviance for January 1s ^t college deadlines |
| December 3 | SAT; ARHS; registration deadline Nov. 8 with fee waiver or no late fee |
| December 10 | ACT; registration deadline Nov. 4 with fee waiver or no late fee |
| December 12 | Teacher recommendations due in Naviance for students applying after December 1 |
| December 13 | Request for school portion of application (transcripts, recommendations) must be in Naviance for January 15 college deadlines |
| December 30 | Registration deadline for January 22 ^{n^d} SAT with fee waiver or no late fee |
| January 1 | Work on 2011 federal income tax forms in preparation for completing the FAFSA. Many FAFSA deadlines are Feb 1 or 15. |
| January 10 | Request for school portion of application materials must be in Naviance for February 1 st college deadlines |
| January 26* | ARHS FAFSA-completion event –bring completed tax return and W2 and leave with your FAFSA almost complete. |
| January 28 | SAT; Northampton HS – registration deadline Dec. 30 with fee waiver or no late fee |
| February 17* | Local Scholarship packet distributed to seniors. |
| April 1 | ARHS Scholarship Application deadline. |
| May 1 | Candidate reply deadline: students must inform colleges about enrollment intentions, and deposit. |
| June 1 | Last day of school for seniors |
| June 8 | Graduation!! |

* = tentative date