

Muncy Jr./Sr. High School

COLLEGE COUNSELING HANDBOOK

2025-2026



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CEEB 392825

Muncy Jr./Sr. High SCHOOL

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CEEB and ACT Code: 392825

**Muncy Jr./Sr. High School
COUNSELING OFFICE**

COLLEGE COUNSELING CALENDAR FOR THE CLASS OF 2026

COVID –SAT/ACT testing policies, and other information changed due to the pandemic is typically addressed on the admissions homepage of each college. Policies vary for each institution.

Senior Year

September

- **Attend College Fair – Tuesday, September 30 at Lycoming College Rec Center**
- Visit the guidance office and update transcript as needed
- Ask teachers to write recommendations (as needed)
- Meet with college representatives visiting Muncy – Dates & times will be on the Guidance Bulletin Board
- Pay attention to SAT and ACT registration deadlines – **Some schools are still optional, check their website**
- If your college list is set, begin applying

October

- October – SAT
- **Financial Aid Night / FAFSA ID Completion– October 22, 2025 5-6pm – ID Completion 6:00-6:30pm**
- FAFSA Form Completion **PHEAA offers live online help.**
- Create a folder for each college
- Visit or re-visit colleges during long weekends and other available days
- Meet with college representatives visiting Muncy – **Dates and times are updated on bulletin board**
- Work on applications
- Narrow list
- Wrap-up visits and schedule remaining interviews

November

- November – SAT
- Narrow list to final selections
- Pay attention to application deadlines and requirements

December

- December – SAT
- Finalize admission applications
- Pay attention to application deadlines and requirements
- Ensure teacher/counselor recs are complete and sent

January

- Ensure financial aid forms are filed
- Request Mid-Year transcripts be sent to schools that require them

February & March

- Begin filling out scholarships
- Check mail for admissions decision letters
- Rank your top schools again
- Student Aid Report (SAR) should be received and corrected as needed
- Pay attention to email and postal mail for word on missing application material

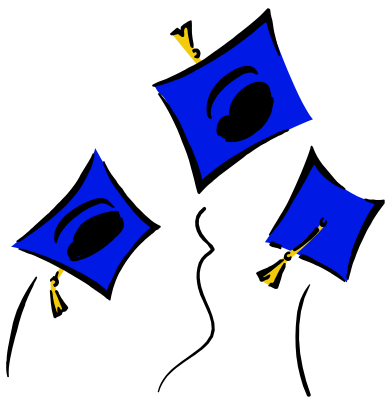
April

- Many admission decisions received this month
- Many opportunities to revisit campuses
- Inform the Counseling Office of your news
- Compare financial aid awards
- Notify those colleges that you are no longer considering

May

- Mail deposits as required-notate all important dates
- Schedule summer orientation session
- Write a thank-you note to your recommenders
- Inform Counseling office of final transcripts to be sent as needed

Guide to the College Admissions Process



How to Get Started

Consider this College Counseling Handbook your roadmap for the process. We have created it to describe our approach to college counseling in a way that will minimize the uncertainty which can surround the college selection process. The handbook is organized in a manner that will take you through all components of the “college admission journey.” If you take the time to read through this Handbook, follow through on the deadlines, and take advantage of the advice and help of your college counselor, you will find the process to be an opportunity to develop your strengths and build on accomplishments. The key to successful college selection rests on good communication among the four parties involved: the student, the parent(s), the counselor, and the college(s). This process can be an exciting journey as you discover the educational opportunities that are available to you. We consider it an honor to be part of your planning for life after Muncy High School. We look forward to working with you over the coming months.



Reflections on College Admission

Welcome to the college counseling process! Though at times stressful, this next year is going to be an exciting step towards your future and we feel privileged to be counseling you through this time. It is significant that our office is called the *Counseling Office*, not the *College Placement Office*, as we will work with you to help you find colleges that match your interests and goals. While further education is important, the end point of your high school experience is not simply “getting into a good college.” The process in which you are about to embark is only one step along your life path. As such, you should view it in perspective – your whole future does not rest solely on a college’s decision about whether or not you will join its entering freshman class.

Despite all the help you will receive, remember the final decisions must be yours. Your willingness to accept these responsibilities – the excitement of envisioning your next step after Muncy High School and the hard work of applying to colleges on time – will indicate your readiness for college and the independence it will offer.

During this process, you will have four primary tasks:

- to determine what you are looking for in a college
- to appraise yourself as a college candidate
- to complete your applications
- to choose the college you will attend

Once college is a common topic of conversation, you will hear reports (often conflicting) about specific colleges from various sources – parents, counselors, teachers, coaches, relatives, and well-meaning friends. To resist stereotypes and rumors, you must investigate for yourself. Start to research on the internet or with a good college guidebook. As you become interested in particular colleges, start your own file of materials. Like any good researcher, keep notes of your findings and questions.

We hope that by working together, we can provide you with the assistance you will need to successfully navigate the college process. To accomplish this task, each member of the partnership must recognize, understand, and fulfill his/her own responsibilities.

Student Responsibilities

It is **imperative** that you pay close attention to every piece of information that you receive from the Counseling Office. These notices contain information about deadlines, visits from college admission representatives, scholarship information, application materials and other important information that will make the process easier.

- **Check your email daily.**
- **Attend College Fairs.**
- **Research the basic admissions criteria at the colleges you are considering.**
- **Plan to visit** as many colleges during spring break and summer vacation as possible among the schools that you might be considering.
- **Complete a Common Application and Personal Essay.**
- **Meet college representatives visiting Muncy** in the fall of senior year.
- **Complete applications honestly and accurately, noting deadlines.**
- **Request letters of recommendation** from teachers. Usually, the same people write recommendations for all of your college applications.
- **Keep your college counselor up-to-date** on all of your plans, progress and results. Communicate regularly with your counselor.

**Some colleges are changing admissions procedures by allowing, or adding, digital media to the process. Pay attention to the school's admissions procedures which may be found on each school's website. If you come across a non-standard method of applying and need help, please speak to your guidance counselor about it.

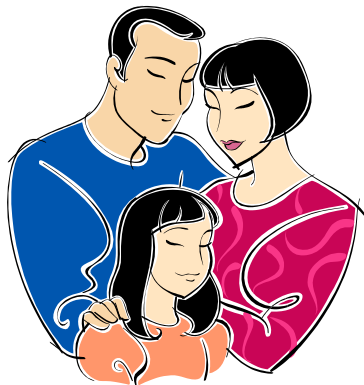
Parent Responsibilities

- **Be open with your child.** Discuss college plans, including the financial picture and any restrictions, openly and honestly with your child early in the process. Share these thoughts with the college counselor either by phone, in writing, or in person.
- **Support and communicate with your child and his or her counselor.**
- **Attend functions with your child.** It is important for you and your child to attend financial aid, career, and college functions together. This will enable you to provide your insight and guidance and stay involved in the process.
- **Be aware of deadlines and other requirements.**
- **Help your child send official test scores to the colleges.** The student, not the counseling office, is responsible for sending test scores to the colleges that require them. Test scores are placed on the official transcript when received, but some colleges require them to be sent directly from the College Board or ACT.
- **Plan your visits.** Assist your child in visiting colleges of interest as much as is appropriate.
- **Fill out and file financial aid forms.** Register for a FSA ID on fsaid.ed.gov if applying for financial aid.
- **Keep talking with your child.** Check with your son or daughter periodically about the progress of his/her college application process, testing, and information distributed at school. But please remember that your child should own the college admission process. Help your child to recognize and celebrate their strengths. A weekly college check-in between parents and students is a good way to balance the need to stay on top of the process with the goal of encouraging students to take responsibility for the process.
- **Support, support, support.**

College Counselor Responsibilities

The counseling staff places a high priority on communication with both students and parents. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's counselor any time they need information or would like to schedule a conference to discuss their child's college plans.

- **Keep students informed** about visits, special events, open houses at colleges, deadlines, scholarships and testing.
- **Make available certain forms:**
 - a. Common Application
 - b. SAT, ACT and Subject Tests registration forms are now all online
 - c. College Board standardized testing and application fee waivers for students who qualify.
 - d. Special scholarship information and applications
- **Prepare and send transcripts** to colleges.
- **Prepare a recommendation for each student as needed.**
- **Send first quarter, mid-year, and final grade reports to colleges.** The college counselor will update class rank and grades and make sure transcripts are ready to be sent. It is important for the student to request transcripts be sent to ensure records are going to the correct schools.
- **Support and counsel students and parents** throughout the college research, application, and selection process as requested.



Especially for Parents

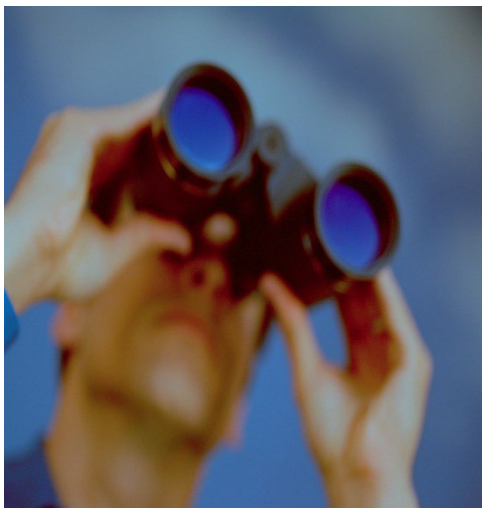
Your Role in College Selection

Adolescents feel a tremendous amount of pressure associated with the college search. You, as parents, play an important role in making this experience more comfortable and productive for your children. You offer your children support as they go through this time of exploration. You act as cheerleaders when a child's confidence flags and when it is appropriate, you urge him or her on to higher goals. At the same time, you also help your children assess themselves and understand what they can realistically attain. If they aren't accepted at a particular school, you assist them in dealing with the disappointment and in moving on. Parents, then, feel a great deal of pressure as well. Some of you may look upon college choice as the "final exam" of parenting and judge whether you have passed or failed by your perception of the "value" of your child's college admission. Try to maintain perspective! Resist the urge to think of the college selection process as merely a "numbers game." Your child is not a 32 ACT, a 1030 SAT, or a 3.15 GPA. Similarly, a college's quality cannot be summarized by a mathematical formula or a national magazine's rankings. Admissions decisions, while they all use numbers as a starting point, are not always rational or obvious, as admission people will sometimes admit after the fact. Making these decisions is, in truth, more of an art than a science. As parents, you should acknowledge and share your aspirations but keep them in the context of all the other factors that are part of your child's college search. You need to lend your support and your guidance to your child, but he or she should be the one to make the decisions and take the lead. Be there for your child, help assure that the right questions are asked, but *let your child be the one who asks those questions*.

For starters, you will probably be asking yourselves how to determine what makes a "good" college. Is it the percentage of applicants the institution accepts each year? Is it the school's average SAT scores? Is it the rating a college receives in a national magazine's report? These numbers, in our opinion, are a poor starting point at best, as they promise a "quick fix", often leading families away from the hard work of finding a truly relevant definition of a "good" institution.

In lieu of the quick fix, we would suggest that a college is "good" for an individual if it:

- ° matches well with a young person's academic, extra-curricular, social, and personal needs and goals.



Beginning the Search

Steps to Follow

One of your tasks during your meetings with your college counselor is to create a college list that reflects the characteristics you are looking for in a college, such as size, location, and quality of academic or extracurricular programs, lifestyle, and so forth. You may come into your early meetings with some colleges already in mind. Your counselor may also make suggestions. You might also add names discovered through reading or conversations with relatives or classmates.

Researching colleges is among the most important tasks you will perform. The goal of your research is to develop a list of colleges that you know well. To that end, you will need to use several sources to determine what makes each college unique and why each one on the list is appealing to you. From this list you will choose institutions to visit during spring break, holidays, over the summer and, ultimately, to apply to in the fall.

Researching Your Colleges

Here are some tips to guide you through the process.

STEP I: INFORMING YOURSELF

READ (especially in catalogs or on the internet). TALK (to knowledgeable people).

THINK (what do you think). VISIT (college campuses).

STEP II: CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A COLLEGE

These are criteria that can be used to evaluate and ultimately choose a college, though some may be more pertinent than others in your search.

1. STUDENT ENROLLMENT:

- **ENROLLMENT**— Very Small (under 1000), Small (1,000-3,000), medium (3,000-7,000), medium/large (7,000-10,000), large (10,000-15,000), or very large (15,000+) college. Freshman class size. % Undergraduate students.
- **RETENTION** - % of freshmen that eventually graduate or return for their sophomore year.
- **BACKGROUND** - Male/female ratio. % Commuter / resident. Geographic origin. % minority. % on financial aid.

2. LOCATION and SURROUNDINGS:

- **LOCATION**— Pennsylvania, East Coast, West Coast, Middle Atlantic states, the South, a foreign country. Distance from home. Travel costs and convenience.
- **SETTING** - Urban/Suburban/Rural. Weather. Nearest city or countryside. Recreational opportunities.
- **FACILITIES** - Library. Laboratories. Study and practice rooms. Student center. Athletic complex. Art studios. Theater. Bookstore. Food sources.

3. COLLEGE TYPE and PHILOSOPHY:

- **TYPE** - 2/4 year. Religious/public/private/historically Black. Coed/Single sex. College/university.
- **PURPOSE** - Liberal arts. Technical/vocational institute. Conservatory. Art /design college. Pre-professional for business, education, engineering, fine arts. Degrees offered.
- **PHILOSOPHY** - Traditional/progressive. Deeply scholarly/career oriented. Comprehensive.
- **CALENDAR** - Semester/trimester/quarter/module. Inter-term program. Accelerated.

4. CURRICULUM:

- **ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS** - Proportion of study dedicated to core requirements/major/electives. Required freshman courses.
- **ACADEMIC OFFERINGS**— Majors/minors offered in your areas of interest. Breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest. Interdisciplinary courses. Strong departments.
- **INDEPENDENT STUDY** - Individual tutorials. Seminars. Research opportunities.
- **SPECIAL STUDY PROGRAMS** - Field work. Internships. Exchange programs. Semester/year abroad study. Joint degree programs. Cooperative work/study plan. Pre-professional programs.
- **STANDARDS** - Accreditation. Degree requirements. Grading system. Grading/distribution. Honor system.
- **COURSE DESCRIPTION** - Introductory/advanced/specialized courses. Courses for majors/non-majors. Number of courses required for major.

5. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT:

- **FACULTY** - % with Ph.D. Origin of degrees earned. Original faculty research/scholarship. Teaching course load. Expectations for teaching/scholarship/advising and other college service. Emphasis on undergraduate teaching and learning.
- **FACULTY-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS** - Faculty-student ratio. Advising. Accessibility for conferences, assistance. Departmental clubs, colloquia, committees with student representatives. Class size, average. Classes under 20 students, over 50 students. Opportunities for discussion/student presentation/exchange of ideas.
- **ACADEMIC DEMANDS** - Workload. Course expectations. Type of assignments. Academic pressure/competition.
- **INTELLECTUAL VITALITY** - Student attitude toward learning. Flexibility/structure for learning. Exchange of ideas. Interest in political, social, or world issues.
- **CAREER PREPARATION** - Pre-professional programs. Career advising and information programs. % who go on to graduate school. Graduate school and job placement.
- **INSTRUCTION** - What types of teaching/learning situations exist? If I know my field of interest, what courses and faculty are available in it? Do full professors teach undergraduates? Is there an advisor system?

6. CAMPUS and STUDENT LIFE:

- **TYPES OF STUDENTS** - Diversity and response to differences. Typical/offbeat student. Importance of money/material possessions/social appearances.
- **COMMUNITY TYPE** - Homogeneous. Pluralistic. Cohesive. Fragmented. School spirit. Controversial campus issues. Liberal/directive/restrictive social regulations. Political climate.
- **LIVING ARRANGEMENTS** - Predominantly large dorms/housing clusters/small houses. Availability of single rooms/doubles/suites/multiple rooms. System of housing allocation/roommate selection. Centralized/decentralized dining. Alternate dining programs. Single sex/coed

dorms. Housing guaranteed.

- **CAMPUS ACTIVITIES** - Activities related to your interests. Emphasis on social life, fraternities or sororities, sports, or other dominant interests. Clubs and organizations traditional/creative/competitive issue oriented. Presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community. Focus of social life on campus/fraternities/community/other college campus/home.

7. ADMISSIONS:

- **DEADLINES** - Application. Notification of decision. Deadline to reply to offer of admission.
- **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS** - Fee. Information forms. Specific high school courses. Secondary school report. Recommendations. Interview. Common Application supplements.
- **SAT/ACT/SUBJECT TESTS** - What are the college's testing requirements?
- **ADMISSION SELECTIVITY** - Percent of applicants offered admission. Average SAT/ACT scores of freshmen. Percent of freshmen ranked in top 10% of high school class. Freshman class profile.
- **FINANCIAL** - Need blind or need considered?

8. COSTS and FINANCIAL AID:

- **COSTS** - Minimum-maximum total costs per year. Student budget for tuition and fees/room and board/books and personal expenses/travel costs. Admission and enrollment fees.
- **FAMILY RESOURCES** - What can your family pay toward college expenses? Your earnings and savings.
- **AWARDS** - % of students receiving aid. Range of awards. Average award.
- **FINANCIAL AID** - Based on need/merit/or funds available. Loan and job expectations. Off-campus work opportunities.
- **APPLICATION** - Which forms are required? Deadlines.

9. LEGACIES: Do I have a family history at the college from which I might benefit?

10. INTANGIBLES: Does the atmosphere of the institution appeal to me?

STEP III: RESEARCHING

Now that you have a better sense of possible questions to ask yourself about colleges, you need to begin the process of obtaining information for colleges on your preliminary list. *You* are the crucial factor in this step. Researching colleges, as with your school work, takes time to do well. You will need to take notes, so always have a pen and paper handy. We suggest that you create a notebook devoted to college research that you bring to meetings with your college counselor. Here are possible avenues to explore:

1. General College Guides: Remember that these are someone else's assessments and views of a given college; do not let one source make a decision for you. We recommend that you research each college in several sources, then move on to the next college. You should consider acquiring your own personal copies of at least one of these guides. A number of publications provide general information about America's colleges. These include: The College Board's College Handbook; Barron's Profiles of American Colleges; Peterson's 4 Year Colleges. Others provide a more subjective view, including: Edward B. Fiske's The Fiske Guide to Colleges; and The Insider's Guide to Colleges, from *The Yale Daily News*.

2. The Internet: The internet is an extremely useful source of information for anyone involved in the college search. You can search college databases, including the one found on College Board, by location, size, major, and cost to find the right matches for you; you can request view books, and course catalogs; you can take a "virtual tour" of a campus; you can browse the curriculum.

As technology continues to expand, we will do our best to stay current with information we think can help you. Here is a short, and by no means complete, list of useful websites. When you begin to "surf," stay alert for particularly great college sites; jot down the Internet address and let us know what you have found so that we can update our list.

Peterson's Guide WWW.PETERSONS.COM

The College Board: WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM

My Road WWW.MYROAD.COM

CollegeNet WWW.COLLEGENET.COM

MyCollegeGuide WWW.MYCOLLEGEGUIDE.ORG

Common Application WWW.COMMONAPP.ORG

Google University Search WWW.GOOGLE.COM/OPTIONS/UNIVERSITIES.HTML

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

WWW.NACACNET.ORG

3. College Admissions Officers: Many colleges send representatives to Muncy in the fall to answer questions about their colleges. We will announce the visits each day as well as post a list online.

4. Friends: You may have friends who are either in college or who have already gone through the college selection process. They are an excellent resource if used with care. Question them about their reasons for choosing certain colleges and avoiding others. See if those reasons fit *your* idea of preferred colleges; never cross a college off your list merely because a friend did not like it. **Think for yourself!**

5. Requesting Materials: You can often request materials directly from a college's website. Admission officers will send appropriate materials and may also ask coaches, drama directors, orchestra conductors, and others to get in touch with you. The more information you provide, the more specific the response is likely to be.



Testing for College Admission

Standardized testing is an important factor in admission decisions, especially at most of the “highly selective” colleges and universities. A few institutions have downplayed the importance of scores, and some have eliminated test requirements entirely. Standardized testing still matters at most colleges. We want you to understand testing requirements and, just as important, to keep them in perspective.

TEST DESCRIPTIONS

1. PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

This test is given in October at Muncy High School.. Registration is handled by the school. Scores from the junior year are used for National Merit Scholarship Qualification (NMSQT) and for student and counselor use only. These scores are not sent to colleges.

2. SAT REASONING TEST

SAT is officially called the SAT: Reasoning Test. It consists of reading and writing sections as well as math.

3. SAT SUBJECT TESTS

These are one-hour tests measuring your knowledge of specific subject areas such as languages, math, sciences, and history are now completely obsolete and no longer given or required by any colleges or universities.

4. ACT – American College Test

An achievement-based test, the ACT is a popular alternative to the SAT and some students do better on this test. Students can submit the ACT in exchange for the SAT Reasoning Test, the SAT Subject Tests, or both, depending on the college’s requirements. Almost all colleges accept the ACT. For more information access their website at: WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG.

5. AP – Advanced Placement exam

These exams are not required for college admission and are used, instead, for college credit or placing in an advanced course in college. College may look favorably on strong results if available, but students are not penalized if they have not taken the AP exams.

6. TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language

Used to evaluate English proficiency, most American colleges require the TOEFL of students whose native language is not English. For more information, access their website at: WWW.TOEFL.COM.

1. **It is your responsibility to register for the SAT and the ACT tests.**
2. **Online registration is the only way for most students to sign up for the SAT Reasoning, or the ACT.** (Go to WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM or WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG and sign up) You will need a valid, major credit card to register. The earlier you register the better.
3. **Know the testing requirements of each college to which you plan to apply.** Note which SAT Subject Tests are required and whether they accept the ACT (WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG) instead of the SAT.
4. **Always use exactly the same name and address when signing up for any tests!** If you sign up once as Jane P. Sherman and as Janie Sherman another time, the computer will treat you as two different people, which can make sending scores to colleges much more difficult. Be just as precise with your address, birth date, Social Security number, and testing codes.
5. **Extended-time testing:** Students eligible for extended time testing must have on file with the School Counselor, Mr. Berthold, an educational evaluation done in the last three years, with a diagnosed disability and specific recommendation for extended time. Please note that it is extremely difficult to obtain extended time for the ACT. See your counselor for details.
6. You will receive an **admission ticket** for all testing sessions. Check the information for accuracy, and to be sure you are assigned to the correct test center. If you are not, or if you have other questions, see your college counselor well ahead of the test date. Save your admission tickets and **score reports** you receive in a specific file, even after you have taken the tests. You may need registration numbers and test dates later in the application process.

Recommended Testing Plan

- Sophomores & Juniors take the PSAT in October
- December: register for and take the SAT Reasoning Test
- Winter or spring: register for and take the SAT
- March/May: SAT test dates can be used to re-take the SAT Reasoning test
- Re-take the SAT Reasoning Test, Subject Tests, and ACT as needed



College Visits

Campus Tours, Information Sessions, and Interviews

Visiting college campuses in person can be one of the most helpful activities during your college search. Touring the campus, talking to current students, and meeting faculty add life and dimension to online descriptions. To schedule a college visit, simply call and inquire about the times for tours, information sessions, and interviews. Also, check the websites for tour and information session times. These visits do not typically require an appointment, but occasionally they do, so call ahead.

Students are expected to complete the majority of their visiting prior to returning to school in the fall of the senior year.

Some families become frustrated by the fact that their first visits may be during times when current students are on vacation. If you would like to visit a college during the school year, please ask for an Educational Trip Request form from the main office to guarantee an excused absence.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE COLLEGE VISIT

1. Call or check online for tour times or to reserve a spot on the tour and information session.
2. Many colleges have a formal information session at a specific time of the day. We recommend you attend this as well as do the campus tour.
3. Call ahead to see if the college offers on-campus interviews and try to arrange one. We recommend interviewing during the summer since it is often difficult to return to campuses during the fall.
4. If possible, attend some classes and also try to spend some time walking around the campus alone, to taste the flavor of the place. Often, visiting the dining hall and the student center, and listening to students talk, are other good ways to get a sense of the school's atmosphere.
5. Explore the areas of campus (and the surrounding area) where you think you will spend the most time. Walk around the academic departments that interest you.
6. Take notes during your visit -- some colleges can begin to look and sound alike after several days of visiting, not to mention weeks later when you are constructing your list.

College Admission Criteria

What Colleges Look For



Before you send an application to a college you must, as best you can, determine if you meet its admission criteria. Take a hard look at yourself, your academic potential, and your accomplishments. The mere fact that you attend Muncy High School—or any other high school, for that matter—does not mean that your college of choice will accept you. Being at Muncy affords you the opportunity to get an excellent education. What you do with that opportunity is up to you. The more selective a college is, the higher its standards are for admission. The best gauge of how you will do in college is your performance in high school. If you have pushed yourself, colleges will note that. If you have combined SATs of 2400, but have only earned C grades, they will note that as well.

1) Colleges will judge you on the courses you have taken and the grades you have earned. While colleges like to see Accelerated and AP courses in a student's program you should not get in over your head. Accept your limitations as well as your strengths. Nothing is gained on the college admissions front by taking an AP or an Accelerated course and receiving a D.

2) Make sure that you have taken the specific courses and tests required by the institution to which you are applying. For example, to apply to engineering colleges, you should take four years of math through Calculus, Physics, and quite possibly the Physics Subject Test.

3) A stellar academic record alone will not ensure your admission to the most selective colleges. What else can you bring to the college: athletic, musical, or artistic talent, uncommon intellectual pursuits, research experience, diversity?

4) **Due to the pandemic, admissions testing such as the SAT are no longer required at many colleges.** As a rule, the more selective the college, the more important the test scores. Do your scores fall within the range presented by most successful students to an institution? If they are below that range, are you being realistic?

When an admissions committee opens your folder to consider you for admission, they will see the following:

Your official transcript

Your official transcript from Muncy will list all your classes taken grades 9-12 and the final grades earned. Your club and athletic records are recorded as well as your SAT/ACT scores and your PSSA scores. **Please note that students must sign a form authorizing Advanced Placement scores to be included on the transcript.** Colleges will consider the rigor of your courses within the context of Muncy's curriculum. If you entered Muncy after grade 9, your former school district(s) will be noted on the Muncy transcript.

Completed application and essay

The application will include all personal information, extracurricular and athletic activities, jobs you have held, and the like. Colleges look closely at this part of the application, particularly the quality of the essay. Each year, we see students who improve their chances of admission because their essays are strong. Students can also be denied admission to colleges for which they were qualified because their application demonstrated little thought or care. The quality of your application is the one aspect of this process that you completely control; take advantage of the opportunity to help yourself. Start early and remember that neatness and spelling count!

Required supplementary materials

Supplementary materials may include a graded paper or an institution-specific essay. These requirements will vary from college to college. Be sure you check with each institution to make certain you have fulfilled its respective requirements.

Faculty / Counselor recommendations

Usually, most colleges require that you submit two letters of recommendation. Ideally, one should be from someone who can speak to your ability to express yourself in writing, which usually means an English or history teacher; the second should be from someone who can evaluate your capacity to think in abstract, analytical, and logical terms, often a science or math teacher. You should select teachers from your junior or senior year as colleges want to hear from the people who have taught you most recently. Your counselor can also assist you in choosing which teachers to ask.

Interviews

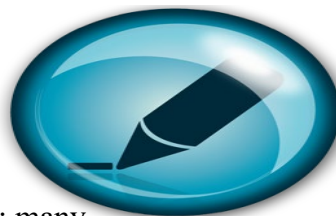
Many schools view your request for an interview as a sign of interest, and this interest can benefit you in their appraisal of your application. However, other college admission offices offer interviews as a way for you to evaluate the school rather than as a means to evaluate you. Regardless, the impression you leave in an interview may become part of your application file.

Test Scores

Your transcript will include your SAT / ACT test scores if you put the correct Muncy School Code in on the test registration forms. PSSA scores are on your transcript as required by state law. PSAT scores are not placed on your transcript and AP scores are only included with your authorization. While most colleges will accept your SAT scores directly from the Muncy High School official transcript, some (Penn State for example) will only accept scores sent directly from the College Board. It is up to you to contact the College Board and have those scores sent when needed.

Creating Your College Application

Putting Your Best Foot Forward



Your completed application is an extension of yourself

You cannot afford to be sloppy and inattentive to details.

Start by using the Common Application online. Remember: many schools on the Common Application also require their own supplement, such as a set of specific shorter essays, another long essay, or a graded paper with teacher comments. Make certain that you check the requirements for each school to which you apply. If one of your schools is not on the Common Application list, photocopy the school's specific application, and use that as your rough draft before you begin to fill out the final form, online if possible.

On the Common Application website (www.commonapp.org), there is a link for downloadable forms where you can find Adobe pdf copies of all of the common application forms, including a *College Deadlines, Fees, and Requirements Grid*, which will provide you with all of the specific application process information for every common application college.

THE APPLICATION

Applications have two parts: "yours" and "ours." You have your responsibilities to fulfill, and the Counseling Office has its own for each school to which you apply.

Student section

You are responsible for sending the following parts of your application:

- your personal information (the application)
- one or more essays (the personal statement)
- various types of supplements (a college's own essay question, a graded paper, a peer reference) if required
- the application fee
- your SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject Tests, and / or ACT scores directly from the testing agency- *If Required*
- securing your teacher recommendations

Counseling Office section

We are responsible for mailing the following:

- Your transcript
- School Profile (If requested)
- Academic Summary
- Counselor Recommendation (If required or requested)

THE ESSAY

Why an essay?

Many colleges and universities require students to write an essay as part of the application (not all—most state institutions do not have this requirement). Why? Because they want to see: a) how well you write, b) as one admissions officer puts it, “how students can wrap their brains around broadly-based questions” and c) who you are, in your own words and from your own point of view.

Along with the interview, the essay affords your best chance to share your thoughts, insights, and opinions; to highlight your accomplishments; and to convey your maturity and outlook on life. Look at the essay, then, as an opportunity to tell the admission committee something about yourself that isn’t in the rest of your application. College essays are therefore different from those you write for English, history or other classes. You try to write well and to “wrap your brain around questions” for those teachers, but usually you do not write about yourself. Some students find it hard, when applying to college, to shift gears and write about a topic that may be close to them personally. The task need not be difficult, however. Here are a few tips, many gathered from admissions officers:

Choosing a topic:

Some colleges simply assign a topic, such as:

- o Describe a person or an event that has been important in your life.
- o If you had to choose four things to put into a time capsule to be opened in a thousand years, what would they be and why?
- o Write about an issue of local, national or global importance.

Many applications, in particular the Common Application, give you the option of writing about a topic of your own choice. Whatever you choose, bear in mind:

- o No topic is inherently a “good” or “bad” one. Admissions people want to discover something about you that they cannot learn from your transcript or test scores, so write about something that matters to *you*, not what you think they want to hear.
- o While no topics are “wrong”, there are wrong approaches. In general, do not dwell on specific experiences, but on your perception of or reaction to those experiences. For example, writing a travelogue about your summer trip to France is trite. (“The view from the Eiffel Tower was the most breathtaking thing I’ve ever seen!!!”) Instead, write about something you learned or that truly moved you while you were there. If you cannot do that, find another subject.
- o Some topics do need to be treated with great care, and should be avoided if you cannot do so. It is very difficult, for example, to write about personal tragedies or those that affect your community or the world. If you choose one of these subjects,

- o be sure to focus less on the events than on how they affected you—and never focus on just the negatives, be sure to note how you’ve overcome this adversity. If you are asserting a strong opinion on a sensitive political, social, or religious issue, we recommend also pointing out that you are open to the opinions of others (if true).
- o Try to avoid writing about privilege in your essay.

Writing the essay:

- o Be yourself, and write for yourself; use your own voice. Generally, we are taught to write for a particular group. The college essay has no audience *per se* except a group of strangers known as the admission committee. With no specific audience, students may compose an essay that attempts to convey an “educated” writer. This approach can result in stilted diction, posturing, and labored prose, rather than writing that reflects energy and spontaneity. If you write from the heart about a topic that is meaningful to you, you will be writing for yourself, and, as a result, your essay will be much more memorable to that group of strangers.
- o Use words you are comfortable with. Do not rely only on a thesaurus. You do not *ratiocinate* or *cogitate*, for example. You *think*.
- o Do not try to be funny unless humor comes naturally to you and you are experienced—and good—at humorous writing.
- o Good writing, as one admission officer put it, is lean, progressive, imaginative, grounded in specifics, energized by apt verbs, and respectful of the reader’s intelligence. Tell your story in a way that *shows*, rather than merely *claims*, that you have learned or matured through the situation or experience you are describing.
- o Your opening sentence needs to “grab” the reader. Admissions people read so many essays that an imaginative opening will grab their attention.
- o Do not allow others to become involved in the writing process, other than as *proofreaders*. It will be obvious if someone else wrote the essay for you!
- o Spelling, punctuation, grammar, clarity, and neatness all matter, and they can sabotage an otherwise competent and compelling essay.
- o Allow plenty of time to write your essay(s). *Edit, re-edit and proofread again and again*. If you wait until the last minute, it will show.

OPTIONS AND DEADLINES

For every application you complete and intend to send there will be deadlines to which you must adhere in order to become a candidate for admission. They are defined as follows:

“Regular” Admissions

Under a regular admission schedule, the student applies by a certain deadline, usually between January 1 and March 1, and is notified of a decision on or shortly after a specific date, most often between March 15 and April 15.

Early Decision (and Early Decision 2)

The Early Decision (ED) deadline, often November 1, is much earlier than the regular one and the student is usually notified of the college’s decision one month later. One of three decisions is possible: Accept, Defer, or Deny. An accepted student is bound to attend the college and must withdraw any other active applications. Students who are deferred are simply put back in the pile and looked at again with the regular pool of applicants. If deferred, they are no longer committed to attending the college should they be accepted later in the year. Some colleges have a policy of denying Early Decision applicants they deem unqualified. While an outright denial can hurt, it does relieve the anxiety of having to wait another four or five months for a decision. A student may submit only one Early Decision application at a time. However, several institutions have ED1 and Early Decision 2 (ED2) deadlines; the latter are designed to attract students who were not ready to apply in November and applicants who may have been rejected or deferred from another college earlier in the year. Other institutions have Early Decision deadlines that are relatively late—for example, January 1—which serve the same purpose as ED2. Early Decision candidates must be ready to apply to other colleges immediately in the event that they do not receive an acceptance of their ED application. Unfortunately, many colleges now use Early Decision as a marketing tool, designed to make them look more selective. In a nutshell, the result of this practice is that some institutions are easier to get into when one applies early. It is essential to ask admissions offices about their ED policies in this regard. If you do not get a satisfactory answer—which sometimes you will not—speak with your counselor before making any commitment. In the Muncy Counseling Office we do not advocate submitting an Early Decision application unless you are absolutely sure that the college is your top choice. Every year we hear students say “I know I am applying early somewhere, I just don’t know where yet.” Using an early decision application as a strategic maneuver to get into a college earlier without really knowing that it is your top choice is an inappropriate use of the Early Decision program. When you use ED as a strategic maneuver, it can lead to matriculating at a school that you later find is a bad fit and ultimately to a transfer process that is stressful for you and your family. We want you to find a place where you will be happy, and if it takes until the regular decision deadline for you to figure out which school is best, we want you to take that time.

Early Action

This plan (also known as “EA”) is similar to Early Decision except that there is no commitment on the part of the student to attend if accepted. A few schools in the United States have adopted an Early Action program that they have named “Single Choice” or “Restricted Early Action.” The Early Action-Single Choice program stipulates that if a student applies EA to any of these schools, they cannot apply under any ED or REA program at any other school. As with any other EA program, if the student is admitted, they are not required to attend and have until May 1 (see “Candidates Reply Date” below) to make their final college decision.

“Rolling” Admissions

Colleges that use rolling admission will review a candidate’s credentials shortly after they are received (usually not before the end of the first high school marking period of the senior year), and will notify the candidate of its decision within a few weeks. The student generally does not have to tell the college whether he or she will be attending until May 1. As a rule, the stronger the student, the earlier he or she may receive a letter of acceptance. *Note that in these competitive times, many rolling admissions institutions become more selective as the year goes on.* It may be best, therefore, to apply early in the year. Always check with your counselor about timing. Submitting a Rolling Admission application *does not* conflict with Early Decision or Early Action-Single Choice programs at other schools.

The Candidate’s Reply Date

The candidate’s reply date is the date by which a student must say either yes or no to a single college, and beyond which no extensions are possible. Most colleges have agreed on May 1 as the Candidate’s Reply Date unless the student has applied and been accepted under the Early Decision plan. However, some do not observe it and will ask the student to send a confirming deposit within two or three weeks. If this happens to you, and you do not want to send your money to one college until you have heard from others, you can almost always call or write the college and get an extension, usually until May 1. They may tell you they still want the deposit, but that it is refundable until that time. **When in doubt, speak to one of the college counselors.** Students should not, however, expect to be allowed to put off their decision until sometime after May 1. Colleges need and have the right to expect a commitment from an accepted applicant at some point, and a May 1 deadline should give most people enough time to make up their minds. Usually, “making up one’s mind” involves sending a substantial deposit--several hundred dollars--to the college one has decided to attend.

Waiting List

The waiting list is a form of “insurance policy” used by many colleges as a hedge against the possibility of unfilled places in an entering class. There is no way to predict a student’s chances of admission from the waiting list, as circumstances and conditions vary each year. Usually, wait lists are not ranked; rather, all wait-list students are reevaluated shortly after May 1. The number of wait-list candidates offered acceptance depends upon the number of places still to be filled. Students should choose to remain on a college’s waitlist only if they are seriously interested in attending that institution. If they are accepted off of a waitlist, students are asked to submit a deposit and at that point the deposit at the other school is lost. If interest is not strong, students should remove their names to give their place to someone else.

Paying for College

About Financial Aid



A four-year college education now costs anywhere between \$40,000 and \$250,000 depending on whether you attend a public or a private institution. While some families can afford these expenses, many must rely on financial aid to help pay the bills. If your parents have not brought up the subject of paying for college, you should do so at the earliest opportunity, since, if you do apply for financial aid you will be bearing a significant portion of the expense in the form of loans at most schools. What follows is general information on the types of aid available, the process of applying and completing forms, and understanding financial aid awards. More information is available at the following websites:

WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV

WWW.PHEAA.ORG

WWW.FINAID.ORG

WWW.COLLEGE-SCHOLARSHIPS.COM

WWW.STUDENTAID.ED.GOV

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is "need-based" as opposed to "**merit-based**." In other words, you receive it because you cannot afford to pay all the expenses yourself. Your academic record usually has nothing to do with eligibility for financial aid, though grades are taken into account at some colleges. Financial aid funds come from the federal government, the college itself, and, in some cases, from state programs. Aid is awarded in a "**package**" comprised of **grants** (which you do not pay back), **student loans**, and **work**, in varying proportions. Loans are often the largest component, and you, the student, must pay these back starting a few months after graduation.

Scholarships are normally defined as financial aid money awarded on the basis of merit, achievement (such as academic or athletic), or need. Scholarships come in three different forms; national, school-based, and local. National scholarships are open to all students across the nation. School-based monies are allocated only to those students who have been accepted at the giving college or university and are typically distributed through the financial aid office of that institution. Local scholarships are those scholarships given to the students of a particular school, county, or local region.

The Muncy High School Guidance Office facilitates all local scholarships to our seniors as they become available. In addition, national and school-based scholarship information that is sent to the guidance office are passed on to students. Because the number of national scholarships increase yearly, the guidance counselor's encourage students to utilize a web-based scholarship search engine such as fastweb.com or collegeboard.com. **Students will be provided information on scholarships received by the guidance office by way of school announcements and by the Muncy School District's website. To check on current listings please check on Mr. Berthold's website which is linked from the Muncy Jr./Sr. High School site.**

THE BASICS OF APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Your parents have certain responsibilities in the financial aid process, and so do you. *It is absolutely vital that everything be done in a timely fashion, strictly according to deadlines.* To drag your feet may very well mean that you will end up without a financial aid package.

At least one, and often as many as three, forms are required to apply for financial aid. In order of frequency, they are the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**), the College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Profile (**CSS Profile**), and, in some cases, the college's own **institutional form**. The FAFSA and the CSS Profile are only available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov, and www.collegeboard.com respectively. When submitted online, the FAFSA and the CSS Profile are sent to central agencies to be processed and forwarded to colleges. Families complete only one FAFSA and one CSS Profile. Institutional forms, on the other hand, are requested directly from each college and returned to its financial aid office.

THE FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):

If applying for any financial aid or state grant monies this form is required by every college and university. As the name implies, there is no fee connected to the FAFSA, which determines your eligibility for Federal financial aid funds, the backbone of every college financial aid program. It is provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

The FAFSA is available online at: **WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV**. Both the student and a parent need to sign the FAFSA electronically and that is now done through an FSA ID available at the FAFSA site. Note: www.fafsa.com and www.fafsa.net, are the websites of private companies who will try to charge you money to fill out your FREE Application for Federal Student Aid. Avoid these sites! *It is your responsibility to log on to the FAFSA website and establish an ID* and share it with your parents, unless they have obtained one online. This will be your ticket to filling out the FAFSA online.

THE CSS PROFILE:

This form is required only by those institutions listed on its registration form. Completing it requires that you register online by going to **WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM**. Registration fees may be paid by credit card when you register. The CSS Profile form asks all the financial questions wanted by the colleges to which you are applying. You can save your information as you work, so you don't have to complete it all in one sitting. Make sure you remember your registration information so you can log back into the College Board website to complete the Profile. There is a fee for each college you send the profile to. Colleges requiring the CSS Profile *also* require the FAFSA.

COMPLETING FINANCIAL AID FORMS

1. Assemble the records you will need:
 - Completed income tax forms for the prior, prior year
 - W-2 Forms and other records of money earned in that year
 - Records of untaxed income such as welfare, social security, AFDC or veterans' benefits
 - Current bank statements
 - Current mortgage information
 - Business (farm) records
 - Records of stocks, bonds, other investments
 - Student's driver's license and social security card
 - Student's alien registration card (if applicable)
 2. Use proper names, not nicknames, and make sure the social security number reported matches the one on the student's card.
 3. If the instructions tell you to skip a question, leave it blank. If your answer to a question is "none" or "zero," put a zero in the answer space.
 4. Make sure you submit the FAFSA and CSS Profile at least five working days prior to your earliest financial aid deadline. If you do not have the required tax forms in time to complete the FAFSA, estimate your figures as closely as possible for the current year. You will have the opportunity to correct the figures later when you know the exact amounts (See #7 below). Consult the Financial Aid offices at the colleges concerned if you need to consider this option. **Keep a copy of all forms for your records.**
 5. The FAFSA allows you to list ten colleges. If you are applying to more than ten, first list the schools with the earliest financial aid deadlines, then list those institutions that do not require the Profile. After your application is received by those colleges, you can then go back and submit it to the rest of your colleges.
 6. Within four weeks (at the latest) of receiving your form, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) through the email account you used to register for the FAFSA. The SAR will either request further information, such as tax information from your completed tax return, or provide you with a figure called the Student Aid Index (SAI). Once you have received a final SAR, you can log in to look at the information, make corrections to it, and print a copy for your records. The information is automatically sent to the six colleges you listed when you filled out the FAFSA online.
 7. For questions regarding problems or difficulties using FAFSA on the Web, or specific questions about the FAFSA, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or 1-319-337-5665. If you do not get a SAR in four weeks, it is wise to call and check on your application.
-

Financial aid letters may accompany letters of acceptance; often they are sent separately. When letters are sent early in the year, some colleges may not specify the exact amount of state and federal aid they are offering you, but rather an estimated award. You will receive exact figures in a later letter. Here are suggestions on how to read and respond to a financial aid letter:

- Look at the combination of awards in the “package.” As we have mentioned, it will consist of two types of aid: “gift aid” (such as *grants* that do not have to be repaid), and “self-help” (usually a combination of *work* and *student loans*).
- In comparing your different packages, pay attention to two things: your *net cost* to attend each institution after financial aid, and the *proportion of grants to loans*. Do not be dazzled by the total amount of money a college offers you; focus on how much you will have to pay out of pocket, both as tuition expenses during your college years and as loan payments afterwards.
- Look for special conditions or requirements attached to your awards. For instance, some institutions require financial aid recipients to maintain a certain grade-point average in order to continue receiving merit awards.
- Be aware that most need-based awards involve federal money for both grants and loans. Financial aid administrators must adhere closely to Government guidelines in awarding federal dollars, and few colleges have enough to meet every applicant’s full need. Even though your need is entirely legitimate, colleges may, for various reasons, award larger packages to other students.
- If you have questions about your financial aid award, or if your family believes that it does not meet your needs, call the college’s financial aid office. Be polite; do not panic or become angry. You will find that most financial aid officers are very helpful. Review any circumstances you think may have been overlooked, and be prepared to offer concrete information if you want them to review your award. The college may be able to adjust your package based on new information, or they may match an offer from another college. Not all colleges will negotiate financial aid awards, however; each institution has different priorities and policies.
- If you are considering more than one college, wait to receive a financial aid letter from each school before making a final decision. While every college will ask you to accept or decline their offer of aid by a specific deadline, they will usually extend the deadline upon your request if you are still waiting to hear from other institutions.
- Once you make a final decision, do not miss the reply deadline; if you do, your money could go to someone else! Follow very carefully the instructions in your award letter, which may ask you to provide more information or to select a lender for a student or parent loan. Complete and sign the necessary forms and send them in. Be sure to notify the other colleges that accepted you that you will not be attending. This important courtesy will allow the institutions to re-allocate your funds to someone else.

SAMPLE FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTER

To help you decipher how much a student will pay for their first year of college there is a sample financial award letter on the next page. Reference the letter below to see that the school lists **direct costs** and **indirect costs**.

Direct Costs are fees the institution bills the student directly and is paid directly to the institution. These typically include tuition, room and board, and mandatory fees such as a health fee or activity fee.

Indirect Costs are fees students pay as part of the college experience that are neither billed by the college nor paid directly to the college. These typically include textbooks and travel among others.

Financial Aid (listed as Source on the example below) are any scholarships, grants, or loans offered to the student to help pay college expenses. Most colleges will list the Federal Direct Subsidized Loan and the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan here.

Cost of Attendance

Cost of attendance is always an estimate and not an exact amount because there are still unknown variables. One of these is the indirect costs are estimated themselves. These fees will vary for different people. In addition, the loans that are listed as financial aid are not mandatory and must be approved after an application process. A student may take no loans, all loans, or pick and choose a loan depending on individual circumstances.

Using the award letter you can calculate how much free money the student is getting (scholarships and grants) versus how many loans they are offered. You can then decide how much the student or parent is comfortable borrowing versus how much money is available to pay privately (out of pocket).

Many people will ignore the indirect costs (subtract them from the estimated total cost) because they have no way of knowing what they will be, and then they will know exactly how much the bill will be from the college. The indirect costs (travel, for example) may be something the student can pay using work study or off-campus job money.



WEST ASH COLLEGE

AD LIBERTATEM PER UNIVERSITATEM

March 21, 2018

Jared Ryan
441 W. Greenwood Ave.
Lansdowne, PA 19050

Dear Jared,

We are pleased to provide you with this estimate of your financial aid for the 2018-2019 academic year. This estimate is based on information you provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and is tentative pending receipt of any required federal, state and/or high school documentation.

DIRECT CHARGES PAID TO WEST ASH		OTHER EXPENSES (NON-BILLABLE)	
Tuition	\$24,946	Books & Supplies	\$1,500
Mandatory Fees	\$1,532	Transportation Allowance	\$1,000
Loan Fees	\$164	Personal Expenses	\$2,000
Room & Board Allowance	\$12,583		
ESTIMATED DIRECT TOTAL	\$39,225	ESTIMATED OTHER EXPENSES TOTAL	\$4,500

SOURCE	FALL 2018	SPRING 2019	TOTAL
University Grant	\$800	\$800	\$1,600
Presidential Scholarship	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$12,000
Pell Grant	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Federal Work Study	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Perkins Loan	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
Federal Direct Unsub Loan	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
ESTIMATED DIRECT TOTAL	\$14,550	\$14,550	\$29,100

ESTIMATED REMAINING BALANCE*	TOTAL
Cost for Full-Time 2018-2019	\$43,725
Financial Aid	\$27,100
ESTIMATED COST TO ATTEND	\$ 16,625

Please note: Estimated net cost is based on estimated direct and non-billable charges minus total grants, scholarships, and loans. Work study is not included in financial aid total because it is not guaranteed. Actual costs may vary due to other non-billable expenses, other scholarships, specific course fees, and other major-related costs.

We are here to help. Please contact us with any questions.

Thank you,
Reggie Strarr
Director of Financial Aid