

# Steps for Wrapping Up Your College Process

We are grateful to you for our collaborative work this year. Congratulations on your diligent efforts and college news thus far. It has been a pleasure navigating the college search with you. You're almost done! The conclusion of this process carries a range of feelings, from relief to confusion to disappointment, even more so during this time of uncertainty. Please read through the following tips and guidelines to help navigate those feelings and the remaining steps to ensure the successful completion of your process.

1. Timing of college decision announcements:
  - a. This year, we expect all admission decisions should be made available to you by April 1st. If a college has not shared a decision with you by that point, please reach out to their admission office or deputize a family member to do so.
2. What the different outcomes mean:
  - a. Admit or deny are both fairly straightforward.
  - b. Conditional or spring admit: You are accepted but with some qualifications. If you are conditionally admitted, there may be some steps the college needs you to take to secure your place. If you are admitted for the spring, the college wants you to have a place on campus but there won't be room in the fall. They might have a plan in place for you for the fall term or they might leave that up to you.
  - c. Waitlist: See below for details on what a waitlist offer means and how you should proceed if you intend to stay on a waitlist.
3. If you want to take a gap year:
  - a. If you plan to take a year off between high school and college, you need to research carefully each college's policy on gap years. This can include how you would request one, often in writing, and by what deadline. Those deadlines can be sooner than you think, so please check. Not all colleges permit students to take a gap year but you will not jeopardize your offer by inquiring about one. Work with your family to determine what a gap year might consist of and then work with your college advisor to convey that plan to your future college's admission office for approval.
4. How and when to make a decision:
  - a. College Advising is glad to talk through decisions provided students and families do some preliminary thinking. For offers of admission that are also financially viable, consider and write down "strong pros," "weak pros," "strong cons," and "weak cons."
  - b. Regarding campus visits, SAAS expects students to maintain good academic standing (which can include attendance) in third trimester classes. While seeing colleges is beneficial, also stay open to creative alternatives for gaining deeper understanding of your final choices and reach out to your college advisor if you have questions or want to talk to alumni.
  - c. The national college deposit deadline is usually May 1<sup>st</sup>. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW WHEN YOUR COLLEGES NEED TO HEAR BACK FROM YOU REGARDING YOUR ENROLLMENT. Double check admission office websites or portals for this information so you do not lose out on any opportunities. Don't miss deadlines regarding financial aid or housing.
  - d. Whenever the deadline might be, make sure you submit only one deposit. You can only attend one college. So-called "double-depositing" is unethical, only prolongs decision making, and won't work because College Advising will only send one transcript to one college for each senior (as well as to colleges where you'd like to remain on a waitlist).

## To Remain Waitlisted or Not to Remain Waitlisted

Should you find yourself on a college waitlist, the tips below can help you determine how to proceed:

- ✓ Do not count on admission from a waitlist! For sanity and reality's sake, start focusing on other colleges and proceed with other decision-making. Remaining attached to a place that waitlisted you can distract from other great colleges where you can make an admission commitment now and thrive next year. We have seen countless times how the unexpected opens a door to something good.
- ✓ The enrollment deposit you make at a college offering admission is critical to holding your place but is likely also non-refundable.
- ✓ Remain on a waitlist only if truly interested. Positively or negatively, respond quickly to a wait-list offer. It's okay if you're not interested.
- ✓ Do not stay on a waitlist just to see if you get in. If you know you won't consider that college as an option, free up the waitlist offers for those students who might attend.
- ✓ If you are interested in the college where you have been waitlisted or deferred, write an email to your admission officer and the admission office email address making your commitment to the college very clear; promising to attend *if you can do so honestly*: "I will attend if admitted." Include any new honors, awards, activities, or senior project details that might strengthen your candidacy. Reiterate strong second tri grades and continue to update them on good third trimester work. Thereafter, weekly or bi-weekly updates can help the college know you're still interested. If the college specifies a specific way to communicate with them, please follow their instructions.
- ✓ Be in touch with your college advisor, who may be asked about your continued commitment to the college where you have been waitlisted. The advisor's knowledge of your genuine interest does not guarantee anything but could influence the college's decision.
- ✓ Waitlist activity can happen well into the summer, especially given the uncertainties in the world this year. It's possible you may make a final choice over the summer when school is not in session. Do not assume you will have access to your college advisor. If this does happen over the summer when College Advising may not have connectivity, please include [registrar@seattleacademy.org](mailto:registrar@seattleacademy.org) which can also provide final transcripts.

- ✓ Know how you would respond if a college phoned you with an offer (yes, it can happen over the phone) even late into July. While not everyone loves or is accustomed to the telephone, it may be how you are notified.

**For final decisions, make a pro-con list that separates big pros (such as “I can afford it” and “it has my major”) from weaker pros such as weather. Again, this is a helpful strategy and a necessary step for a “decision” meeting with College Advising.**

#### STRONG PRO

#### WEAK PRO

#### STRONG CON

#### WEAK CON

Also, is prestige, family/peer pressure, or the long attachment to one school driving a choice against better judgment? We have seen students choose a college based on so-called name recognition when another college actually fits them best or is more practical/affordable.

### After You and the Colleges Have Decided

Once a college has notified you of its decision, please inform College Advising so that the school's records will be accurate. We request that you update an outcome for each of the schools listed in your Maia account by emailing us all decisions and send us the specifics of merit scholarship money (amount and whether renewable each year). This information is required and helps us advise students in future years.

As soon as you are certain of which college you will attend, you **MUST** tell all other colleges to which you applied, withdrawing your candidacy to make room for other applicants. Generally people do this through a portal or through a means the college describes in its offer letter. If not, do so in a courteous note (an email to your admission counselor or to the admission office is acceptable); see sample below.

You are ethically bound to respond to all the colleges where you are admitted by the Candidates' Reply Date. **Again, it is unethical to pay enrollment deposits and make promises to attend two colleges.** We will not support students committing to more than one college and will only send your final transcript (required) to one college. If you have been placed on a waitlist, you may retain that place after making an enrollment deposit, but be honest if the college asks you.

Dear Office of Admission:

I am grateful for the consideration shown to me and for the offer of admission. After careful thought, however, I have decided to attend \_\_\_\_\_ College/University. Therefore, I am withdrawing my application to your institution.

Sincerely,

Name, School, Date of Birth, Address

### More Important Topics to Reiterate/Consider

- ✓ If you applied for need based financial aid and have not received financial aid packages that you expected to receive from your colleges, it is imperative that you call the admission or financial aid phone numbers soon and ask when to expect your package.
- ✓ Third trimester *still matters*. The grades of third trimester, a shorter than usual trimester (the end of which can surprise some students!), are part of your final transcripts which is required at the college you choose. As we have discussed, grades from winter and spring trimester that are lower than those on which you were admitted can result in the reversal of your offer of admission. If you already know your grades are inconsistent with past performance, work with your college advisor before the end of the year to prepare a statement to colleges. You may or may not need to submit something like this, but it's better to have it ready just in case.
- ✓ Continue to make good decisions. Your college may expect you to report any change in disciplinary status.
- ✓ If you are considering taking a gap year, remember that the best reason for you to choose a gap year is to gain growth or experience that you will take with you to college. Do not take a gap year if you think it will fundamentally change your admission options. Most people do not want to reapply to college during a gap year. Colleges may also make *not reapplying* to college a condition of your official gap year. Make sure you have sent an admission deposit/commitment to one of the colleges that already offered you admission (where you will enroll after your gap year) and that you have thought through the financial requirements and practical realities of a gap year.
- ✓ Remember that we are proud of and excited for your college options. Thank you for the great work together!