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Dear Upcoming Juniors:

Congratulations on the successful completion of the first two years of your high school education. Your School Counselors look forward to working with each of you in preparation for your next two years, and especially for your life after high school. This is an exciting time as together we look forward to the numerous opportunities available to each and every student.

During your time at Unionville it is imperative to maintain a balanced approach to academics, extracurricular activities, and friendships. All three play a vital role in your growth and development as an adult. All three will help articulate your dreams and goals for the future beyond UHS. These next two years offer a chance to continue your success or begin developing these important areas. It is never too late to learn how to learn, become involved in school, or meet new people.

Junior year is a busy year. There are many increased responsibilities that accompany your status as an upperclassman. You will have the opportunity to meet a number of college representatives who visit in the fall. You will have the opportunity to practice for the SAT by taking the PSAT. Beginning in late January, you and your parents will continue discussing future plans by meeting with your school counselor at the Junior Planning Conference. You will encounter many other activities and responsibilities along the way which will challenge you to examine where you are in the future planning process. We recognize this process evolves differently for each individual and encourage you to embrace new challenges and growth opportunities.

The planning guide contained in this packet has been developed to help you through this process. Because this process is fluid, it is very important to consult this guide throughout the year to remain informed and up to date about your responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to meet with your school counselor. Good luck and have a great junior year!

Sincerely,

Your School Counselors

Counselor	School Counselors 610-347-1600 610-347-1677 (fax)	Student Last Names
Nancy Christy, M.Ed., nchrist@ucfsd.org		A-Ce
Frank Deady, Ph.D., Chairman, fdeady@ucfsd.org		Cf-F
Greg Hilden, M.S., ghilden@ucfsd.org		G-Kiq
Maribeth Lyles, M.Ed., mlyles@ucfsd.org		Kir-Mul
Lora Beckman, M.A., lbeckman@ucfsd.org		Mum-Sho
Carolyn Spiegel, M.Ed., cspiege@ucfsd.org		Shp-Z

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To fulfill graduation requirements, students must earn a minimum of 22 credits and complete a Graduation Project. Graduation Project booklets are available in the Counseling Center and are distributed to students during their freshman year.

Required credit distribution includes:

<u>UHS Requirements</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Recommended by College</u>
4 credits	English	4 credits
4 credits	Social Studies	4 credits
3 credits	Mathematics	4 credits
3 credits	Science	4 credits
1 credit	Arts or Humanities	2 + credits in Language
1.5 credits	Health & Physical Education	
0.5 credit	Windows Software Applications	
5.0 credits	Electives	

Course sequences have prerequisites and minimum grade requirements before a student can proceed to the next level. Advanced Placement and Honors level courses are available to qualified students. All students are to carry a minimum of five and one-half credits ($5 \frac{1}{2}$) each year and enroll in thirty (30) class periods per cycle, per semester.

ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to become involved in school activities. The extent to which you are involved in a few select activities is more important than the sheer number or scope of activities to which you belong. Activities provide students with the opportunity to explore their interests and be social at the same time. A list of school activities can be found on the UHS website. Activity booklets with descriptions of activities are also available in the Counseling Center. It is never too late to get involved!

POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

Up to this point, your educational path has been micro-managed by parents, teachers, and administrators. This is the point in your life where much of that changes. Ultimately, it is you who decides the future and the first step is to make a plan for after graduation. What is your plan?

2 year college _____

4 year college _____

Trade/ Technical School _____

Employment _____

Military _____

Undecided _____

COLLEGE PLANNING

A TIMELINE

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

AUGUST

- ⇒ Do your best to start the school year off strong
- ⇒ Begin to consider characteristics that are important to you when researching colleges. For example the type of student body, location, campus, travel abroad options, etc. Create an initial list of schools to research based on some of these characteristics. Use resources such as DISCOVER and NAVIANCE to search for schools.

SEPTEMBER

- ⇒ Listen to the announcements for the official PSAT dates and when registration will be held in the Counseling Center
- ⇒ Students may have a list of college(s) in which they are interested. They are invited to attend meetings held in the Counseling Center with college admission representatives. Prepare a list of questions for the admissions representative. Students are required to sign up at least a day in advance and get their pass signed by the classroom teacher. Students are responsible for all missed work. Ultimately it is a teacher's decision to allow a student to miss class for these visits. Upcoming visits are posted in the Counseling Center. Check the Counseling Center website for an updated list each week.
- ⇒ IEP and 504 students who are eligible for SAT and ACT testing accommodations for standardized testing should contact their counselor if they have not yet applied for such accommodations. Some students may have completed the application process during their sophomore year.

OCTOBER

- ⇒ Register in the Counseling Center for the official PSAT which is given once a year. Be sure to register for the official PSAT to be given on the national testing date.
- ⇒ Attend the Chester County College Fair. In preparation for the fair, continue to research schools and create a list so that you can speak to the college admissions officers.
- ⇒ Begin to show interest. Access the necessary college information such as catalogs and all application materials (via website, mail, and phone). Speak with your family about arranging visits to various campuses during the fall and spring of your junior year.
- ⇒ Take advantage of scheduled school breaks to visit colleges.
- ⇒ Attend Academy Night if you are considering applying to one of the following: U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, ROTC, NROTC, or AFROTC.

NOVEMBER

- ⇒ If interested in a summer enrichment opportunity, begin searching. Many applications are due in the spring. For example, attend the Governor's School of Excellence presentation given by your School Counselors to learn more about this wonderful experience.

DECEMBER

- ⇒ Review your PSAT results and determine what prep work you need to do for the SAT. Begin to access SAT prep resources (see Counseling Center website).
- ⇒ Look at the registration dates and test dates if you plan on taking the SAT REASONING, SAT SUBJECT or ACT Tests in the spring. Aim to take the SAT and/or the ACT at least once by the end of your junior year. (Remember that senior year offers you opportunities to test again, but be aware of deadline dates for college applications.) Please talk with your School Counselor if you have questions regarding the appropriate time to take the SAT Subject Tests.

JANUARY

- ⇒ Course selection time begins. Plan on attending the “Course Selection Night.” Speak with your current teachers about appropriate course selections, and see your school counselor with any questions. Be certain to check academic required/recommended courses for college acceptance.
- ⇒ Attend the UHS “Future Planning Night”

FEBRUARY

- ⇒ Call the Counseling Department prior to February 15th to schedule your Junior Planning Conference.
- ⇒ Complete and return the Junior Planning Conference Pre-Meeting Questionnaire by 2/1.

MARCH

- ⇒ Begin to consider teachers who you might ask to write your letters of recommendations for college.
- ⇒ Continue to refine your list of schools and use any scheduled breaks to visit colleges.

APRIL

- ⇒ College applications for the upcoming school year may be available by now. Identify the specific requirements for individual college applications (see appendix A). This is an excellent time to review the essay requirements and reflect on the prompt.

MAY

- ⇒ AP Exams
- ⇒ If you are considering playing a sport at the collegiate level, you need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse for your **initial** eligibility. Be sure to submit both forms to the Counseling Center (see ncaaclearinghouse.com). Your **final** NCAA Clearinghouse form will be sent after graduation.
- ⇒ Attend the Mainline College Fair. In preparation for the fair, continue to research schools and create a list so that you can speak to the college admissions officers.

JUNE

- ⇒ Approach a teacher and personally request a letter of recommendation. If the teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation, you **MUST** complete a Request for Letter of Recommendation form. If this is not completed by the end of your junior year, it is important to communicate with the teacher when you return in the fall of your senior year. You are required to give the teacher your request at least 4 weeks prior to the deadline issued to you, the student, by the Counseling Center.
- ⇒ Do well on finals. This is the last chance you have to impact your final grade and cumulative GPA.

SUMMER- Although it is a break from the daily routine of school, it is necessary that you continue to work on different aspects of the application.

Continue to identify characteristics you want in a college and update your college list

- ✓ Make an honest assessment of your academic and personal profile. Select a reasonable range of realistic and appropriate colleges to research based on academic requirements, majors offered, geographic area, athletics/extracurricular offerings, size, financial considerations, college philosophy/ mission and your personal philosophy.
- ✓ Research majors and career choices. Ask yourself, “What should a good program in this major look like?” Research resources offered by professional associations and accrediting organizations related to the major. (For accreditation information, go to <http://www.chea.org/search/default.asp>)

Continue to access and organize college applications requirements

- ✓ Colleges have specific requirements regarding application procedures and deadlines. It is your responsibility to be aware of the specific details or procedures, and be prepared to follow the directions. In addition, the UHS Counseling Department has specific requirements which must be followed in order to process your request in a timely and orderly fashion (see page 15).

Develop your college essay

- ✓ NOW is the time to look at the essay requirements for each school. A strong essay can be the turning point for an application. Something that can carry so much weight in an application should not be postponed until the last minute. Use the summer to reflect on the topic colleges have given you to write.

Complete the Autobiographical Sketch for your School Counselor

- ✓ Again, this is a task that requires an investment of your time, reflection and thoughtfulness. This is a vital tool that the school counselor will use to compose your letter of recommendation. The quality of your responses may affect the quality of the letter that can be written. If you want a sincere investment in your letter of recommendation, please begin with a sincere investment on your part as well. Please note that your Autobiographical Sketch and Parent Brag Sheet are due to the Counseling Center by October 1st of your senior year.

WHERE DO I START?

Step One: Know Yourself

Choosing a college is not always simple. This is a time in your life when being reflective, patient and thoughtful will really help in your decision making process. It is necessary to devote time and energy when deciding which college(s) to consider, and the process begins with self-analysis and research.

Self-assessments can be difficult and sometimes uncomfortable; however, it is really the most important place to begin in this process. Begin by asking yourself the following questions which pertain to you as a person and student.

1. Who am I?
2. What matters to me?
3. How would a friend describe me?
4. How would I describe myself to someone who doesn't know me?
5. Why do I want to further my education? Why am I choosing to pursue a college education? What interests do I want to pursue in college?
6. How do I want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth I would like to see?
7. What satisfactions and frustrations do I expect to encounter in a university?
8. What degree of academic challenge and setting is best for me? How important is the prestige/ academic reputation of the college I attend? What size of college and class size will work best for me?
9. How would I feel about going to a university where I was rarely told what to do? How much structure and direction do I need through advisement?
10. How would I enjoy living in a different part of the country or world? How often do I want to be able to go home, or have family visit me? What kind of change in my lifestyle am I willing to make? How close or how far away from home do I want to be?
11. What kinds of surroundings are essential to my well being? Are there certain places, activities, terrain, weather or pace of life which make me happy? Do I prefer a fast paced environment where something is happening most of the time? Do I prefer an organized environment where I can join a wide variety of planned activities? Do I prefer a more relaxed environment where I can go my own way?
12. How would I feel about going to a university where the other students were quite different from me? How would I react? Would I be intimidated or exhilarated? Would I prefer to be with people who share my viewpoints and lifestyle or who challenge me to make and question my perspectives? What sort of personality do I want in a college?
13. If I am considering playing sports at the collegiate level, what is my vision of this? Does the program and level meet my expectation? Do I have an understanding of the program's expectation of me as a student and an athlete?

Step Two: Research Possibilities & Create the List:

There are endless resources in print and on the World Wide Web to use when researching colleges. Students should use these resources to research both career and college data. Do not limit your search by using only one search engine.

NAVIANCE

DISCOVER

UHS Counseling Center Resource Page

UHS Future Center

Collegeboard.com

College planning resources found at bookstores or public libraries

Keep an open mind and take advantage of the wide variety of university representatives who visit our school. It is important to make a personal connection with the college, and you can start by talking with the representatives of the universities. They can give you first-hand information regarding their school, and also give you ideas of other colleges, parallel programs or career opportunities after graduation. Remember, many of the college representatives who visit our school are the representatives who read your applications and can add significant input to the admissions committee discussions.

Ultimately, the goal is to find the right fit at the end of this process. When students are able to find this fit, they are more likely to be successful academically and personally. Finding the right fit can be both enriching and empowering for a student. You may begin to discover your hidden potentials and positive attributes, and eventually begin to meet and overcome your challenges.

1. Given my academic profile and personal qualities, what colleges and universities are realistically within my reach?
2. If I know what I want to study, which colleges offer that major or program of study?
 - a. Are there important differences in this major among the colleges I am considering?
 - b. Would I be admitted directly into this major or are there additional screening steps once I have been enrolled?
 - c. If I am unsure about my major, will that impact my opportunities to select specific majors in the future? Which majors require me to begin with that designated major? If I don't know what I want to study, what should I do? (Almost ALL colleges encourage students to apply as undecided or undeclared applicants.)
3. What are the institutional priorities, and do they match my personal priorities? Do I feel there is a connection between the philosophy/mission of the school and my personal values and preferences? (For example, if technology is important to you, develop a checklist or questions to ask when you visit the school. Research different resources for a starting point such as www.educause.edu.)

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE VISITS

Visiting the college is probably the most important factor in this entire process. The purpose of visiting a campus is to see the real life version of the institution and gauge whether or not you could “see” yourself there. Colleges are looking for qualified students who “fit” their institutional priorities. As a student, you need to find a college that matches your personal and academic priorities. A visit provides a reality check.

We have developed this guideline to help you remember all the qualities and characteristics of a campus which may effect whether or not it could be an eventual fit for you. Remember that just as a school is reviewing your qualities for admission, you are reviewing the college’s qualities for applying and possibly enrollment. It is highly recommended that you limit the number of schools you visit within the same day. Be sure to allocate enough time to absorb all of the aspects necessary to make a sound and insightful decision.

PRE-VISIT CHECKLIST:

College: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Tour Time/ Place: _____

Contact/ Phone: _____

Do I have the necessary directions? Yes No

Do I need a parking permit? Yes No

Do some preparation work. Consider doing a virtual tour prior to your visit and make note of the specific areas which you would like to see. Make sure to read the college website FAQ’s. Avoid asking questions which you should have already researched and know the answer to. Some schools will request that you bring an unofficial transcript with you to the college visit. Unofficial transcripts are available in the Counseling Center. Decide what you want to learn about and put together a list of questions.

For example:

- ✓ What majors are offered and what are the course selection requirements?
- ✓ What is the average class size?
- ✓ Are there freshman orientation programs?
- ✓ What is the role and availability of academic advisors?
- ✓ Does the college have up-to-date technology and facilities? (For example: science labs, theatres, smart classrooms?)
- ✓ What are the operating hours of important places such as the library and computer labs?

THE ACTUAL VISIT: When on campus, there are several formal and informal ways to evaluate the college.

Formal

Take a campus tour

Have an interview with admission officer

Participate in a group information session at the admission office

Sit in on a class (or two!)

Talk to a coach in your chosen sport

Talk to a student or counselor in the career center

Spend the night in the dorm with a current student

Attend an event on campus

Talk to a professor (or two) in your prospective major(s)

Informal

Eat in the cafeteria

Ask a student why he/she chose this college

Walk around the campus by yourself

Search for your favorite book in the library

Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus

Ask a student what he/she does on weekends

Browse in the college bookstore

Listen to the college's radio station

Try to see a dorm that you didn't see on the tour

See if you can imagine yourself at this college

Places to See & Questions to Ask

Bookstore

Health center (hours and services)

Places of Worship

Student Union Center

Off campus stores

Financial Aid Office

Fraternity/Sorority houses

Counseling and Disability Services Office

- ✓ Read the student newspaper- even the ads. Try to find other student publications, department newsletters, alternative newspapers, or literary reviews. What interests the student body? What is the climate of the community?
- ✓ Read the bulletin boards in the student union. What is the "talk" on campus? Read the bulletin boards in the academic department you're interested in. Is it useful and relevant? Anything exciting or resourceful?
- ✓ Check out the Student Event Calendar, what type of entertainment do they bring to campus?
- ✓ Library- What are the hours and resources available to students?
- ✓ Classrooms- are they up to date and user friendly?
- ✓ Dining facilities- can I eat here?
- ✓ Dorms- can I live here?
- ✓ Career placement office- what services are provided for students before and after graduation?
- ✓ The local community- is there a positive relationship between the school and community?
- ✓ Does the college offer an application fee waiver for students who have visited the campus?

POST VISIT FOLLOW- UP:

- ✓ Take notes on what you saw or what you didn't see
- ✓ Make a pro and con list
- ✓ Send a handwritten thank you note to a specific person (for example, the admissions tour guide, coach, admissions officer).

TYPES OF APPLICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Most applications are available online, and admissions offices often prefer you access their online application. There are two basic types of applications which a student can use to apply to college:

1. School designated application
2. Common Application- www.commonapp.org.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Most applications are available online. Online applications are very convenient; however you must be certain to **pay close attention to the directions and details of each application**. Each school will have specific application requirements. It is up to the student to know and follow the specific directions for each application. For example, some schools will require a **School Report** (also known as a Secondary School Report or Guidance Counselor Form) which the student is required to print and personally deliver to the school counselor. Also, some schools will require a **Teacher Evaluation**, which the student is responsible for printing and personally delivering to his/ her teacher. The teacher will complete this form and return it to the designated school counselor, not the student. Please be sure to complete the applicant section of the Teacher Evaluation forms prior to giving them to the recipient. Often, students fail to complete the applicant section and the forms are without a name. If a School Report and/or Teacher Evaluation are required, and a student does not submit the paperwork, an application will be deemed incomplete by the college. If you are doing an online application, be sure to print a copy for your records.

PAPER APPLICATIONS

Hardcopy applications are still available for almost all schools. Paper applications can be requested by either contacting the Office of Admissions at your chosen college or by ordering an application on the university's website. Limited quantities of paper college applications can be found in the Counseling Center.

Although colleges do not discriminate between electronic and hardcopy applications, realize that paper applications may take longer to process. Whereas the personal data found in electronic applications are processed almost immediately, paper applications must be processed and recorded by hand. It is acceptable to apply by paper unless otherwise stated by the school.

OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

Colleges require an official high school transcript with each application. For the transcript to be considered official, it must come directly from the UHS Counseling Department to the college or scholarship program for which you are applying. We will not release an official high school transcript unless we have received a signed **Permission to Release** form. Permission to Release forms can be found in the Counseling Center, or you may download the form from the Counseling Center website. The high school transcript includes the student's name, mailing address, 9th, 10th and 11th grade course selection with final grades and cumulative GPA. If the student is under 18 years old, the UHS Permission to Release form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Please refer to the college application requirements regarding Standardized Test Score requirements. If a college requires that the "Official Test Scores" be sent, the student is responsible for contacting the appropriate testing agency and having the scores sent. If the college does not require official standardized test scores to be sent, the Counseling Center can send an unofficial standardized test score report. The request for unofficial standardized test scores to be sent to a college must be indicated on the completed Permission to Release form.

There are three common standardized tests which colleges may require as part of the application. They include the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Test and the ACT. Students should research the option(s) which is best for them, and determine the appropriate test(s) based on admission requirements and personal preference. Keep in mind when planning your test date schedule to consider college deadlines, especially for Early Decision, Early Action and scholarship opportunities. It is also important to plan for test dates because of extracurricular activities and family obligations which may conflict with testing dates. Fee waivers for the cost of the standardized tests are available through the Counseling Center if financial need is determined.

IEP and 504 Students who are registering for the SAT and receive special testing accommodations by the College Board will need their eligibility code when registering for the SAT. Students considering the ACT will need to see their School Counselor to apply for testing accommodations at least 8 weeks prior to the selected test date.

Differences regarding the structure and components of the specific tests can be found on various websites such as www.princetonreview.com or www.kaplan.com.

SCHOOL PROFILE

The school profile is a description of Unionville High School used by colleges as a point of reference when evaluating our students' applications and transcripts.

LETTER(S) OF RECOMMENDATION

The letter of recommendation can be a vital part of a student's application. Schools have **different requirements** regarding recommendation letters, and we suggest you follow the application directions. Typically, colleges require a minimum of two letters of recommendation from junior or senior year teacher(s) who taught you in academic subjects. To obtain a letter of recommendation from a teacher, the student must complete a **"Request for Letter of Recommendation"** form at least 4 weeks prior to the Counseling Center due date.

To obtain a Counselor Letter of Recommendation, the student must complete the **Autobiographical Sketch** and the parent(s) should complete the **Parent Brag Sheet**. These forms can be found in the Counseling Center or on the Counseling Center website and must be submitted no later than October 1 of your senior year.

SCHOOL REPORT

The School Report can be part of a college application. Students must thoroughly look through the application and see if a school report is included (other names include Secondary School Report or Guidance Counselor Form etc.) The student is responsible for giving the School Report for **EACH** application to his/her counselor, unless they are using the Common Application. If students are using the Common Application, students are required to bring one copy of the School Report and the counselors will generate copies. The counselors will include the School Report when they process the application if it is requested on the Permission to Release form.

SUPPLEMENT(S)

Please be aware that many schools require supplemental materials as part of the application requirements. Applications are not considered complete until all supplements are complete and submitted. Common supplements are the School Report, Teacher Evaluation, Mid-Year Report and college designated essay. When using the Common Application, students must consult the colleges' application requirements listed within the Common Application booklet.

ESSAY OR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is one of your greatest opportunities to be heard by the members of the admissions committee. This is your chance to honestly portray who you are. Therefore, time should be taken before you compose your personal thoughts and feelings. The admissions committee is not only judging you by the content of your response, but also by your use of English and your ability to express yourself. It is recommended that you ask to have your essay read by a school counselor and proofread by a teacher. Here are some things to consider when writing your essay.

- Write your OWN essay in your OWN voice- students do not ordinarily use “theretofore” in their essays. Admissions officers can easily spot an essay that is too polished and not a student’s own writing.
- Don’t try to second guess the essay and write what you think they want to hear. Be honest, creative and thoughtful. This is one way the admission committee can gauge who you are, how you think and if you are a match for their school. Many prompts and questions are autobiographical in nature. Do not disown yourself by evading what is often times the subject- YOU.
- Take creative risks, but be sure it is done correctly. Feel free to appropriately display your sense of humor, intellectual curiosity, interesting experiences or personal perspectives. Be who you are- if you are funny, be funny. If you are not, don’t try to be. Admissions officers read thousands of essays, and it is refreshing when an applicant does something different; just make sure it is appropriate and accomplishes the given task.
- Write clearly, concisely and to the prompt. Do not use the essay for numerous schools if it doesn’t fit their prompt. Write to the actual college- be sure to make sure you send the right essay to the right college.
- Make sure the essay has been proofread and edited- it is a reflection of you the student and person.
- It is not about telling them who you are, but **showing** them what you have done. Create the story for them, bring it alive and invite them to be part of the personal experience. Explain that “ah-ha” moment where something significant resonated with you and challenged or perhaps even changed your pattern of thinking.
- Use details from your college visit to specify how you would benefit most from and contribute the most to that particular college.

Remember that the admissions committee is trying to “get to know you” through your application, and the essay is considered the most valuable tool. A neatly typed and accurately expressed essay will communicate to an admissions office that your interest is genuine. The essay itself must be your own work, but you are encouraged to solicit constructive criticism of your grammar and written expression before submitting your application. There are several resources for essay writing. Some colleges, such as Connecticut College, will post a sample of strong essays that managed to catch their attention and “grab” the reader. When charged with the task of writing the college essay, consider using the Essay Writing Process.

The Essay Writing Process

To write a college essay, use the exact same three-step process you would use to write an essay for class: first prewrite, then draft, and finally edit. This process will help you identify a focus for your essay, and gather the details you'll need to support it.

Prewriting- To begin, you must first collect and organize potential ideas for your essay's focus. Since all essay questions are attempts to learn about you, begin with YOU.

- **Brainstorm**

Set a timer for 15 minutes and make a list of your strengths and outstanding characteristics. Focus on strengths of personality, not things you've done. For example, you are responsible

(not an "Eagle Scout") or committed (not "played basketball"). If you keep drifting toward events rather than characteristics, make a second list of the things you've done, places you've been, accomplishments you're proud of; use them for the activities section of your application.

- **Discover Your Strengths**

Do a little research about yourself: ask parents, friends, and teachers what your strengths are.

- **Create a "Self-Outline"**

Now, next to each trait, list five or six pieces of evidence from your life— things you've been or done—that prove your point.

- **Find Patterns and Connections**

Look for patterns in the material you've brainstormed. Group similar ideas and events together. For example, does your passion for numbers show up in your performance in the state math competition and your summer job at the computer store? Was basketball about sports or about friendships? When else have you stuck with the hard work to be with people who matter to you?

Drafting- Now it's time to get down to the actual writing. Write your essay in three basic parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

- The introduction gives your reader an idea of your essay's content. It can shrink when you need to be concise. One vivid sentence might do: "The favorite science project was a complete failure."
- The body presents the evidence that supports your main idea. Use narration and an incident to show rather than tell.
- The conclusion can be brief as well, a few sentences to nail down the meaning of the events and incidents you have described.

Editing- When you have a good final draft, it's time to make improvements, find and correct any errors, and get someone to give you feedback. Remember, you are not always your best editor. However, no one can speak for you; your own words and ideas are your best bet.

- **Let It Cool-** Take a break from your work and come back to it in a few days. Does your main idea come across clearly? Do you prove your points with specific details? Is your essay easy to read aloud?
- **Feedback Time-** Have someone you like and trust (but someone likely to tell you the truth) read your essay. Ask them to tell you what they think you're trying to convey. Did they get it right?
- **Edit Down-** Your language should be simple, direct, and clear. This is a personal essay, not a term paper. Make every word count (e.g. if you wrote "in society today," consider changing that to "now").
- **Proofread Two More Times-** Careless spelling or grammatical errors, awkward language, or fuzzy logic will make your essay memorable — in a bad way.

UHS COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Download or acquire applications from the schools which interest you.
- Determine what is needed for you to complete your part of the application. Be aware of each school's application deadline and plan appropriately. It would be helpful to use the Application Checklist.
- If a recommendation is required from a teacher, complete the Request for Letter of Recommendation form and give to the teacher at least 4 weeks prior to the Counseling Center deadline. If you need a letter of recommendation from your School Counselor, you must complete the Autobiographical Sketch and a parent must complete the Parent Brag Sheet by October 1 of your senior year.
- Complete the application.
- Make an appointment with your counselor to submit COMPLETED college application materials at least ten school days prior to the application deadline. Be aware that school's deadlines vary and may depend on the postmark.
- Bring COMPLETED application materials and the UHS Permission to Release form to the Counseling Center on the day of your appointment. Your School Counselor will not accept your application materials unless everything is complete, including a pre-addressed envelope with proper postage. If you have completed your application online you are still responsible for a UHS Permission to Release form along with proper mailing materials and supplemental forms.
- Double check to see that your activity sheet has been updated and your transcript is in order.

COLLEGE TERMS

Associate's degree: A two- year degree, students may apply credits from a two- year program to a four-year program

Bachelor's degree: A four-year degree

Binding Decision: If you are accepted, you must attend that college (ED)

The Common Application: An application that many colleges subscribe to, which is filled out once and can be used to apply to one or multiple colleges. www.commonapp.org

Deferral: An EA or ED application may be deferred for review with the regular applicant pool

Early Action (EA): An application deadline as early as November 1st, which will generally provide a non-binding response from the college by December 15th. Students may apply to multiple EA colleges.

Early Action/ Single Choice: A handful of colleges offer this option which restricts students to a single, non-binding EA application

Early Decision (ED): An application deadline as early as November 1st, which will generally provide a binding response from the college by December 15th. Students may apply to only one college ED. If accepted, a student must withdraw applications sent to all other colleges.

Liberal Arts College: A liberal arts college is an institution of higher education found in the United States, offering programs in the liberal arts at the post-secondary level. They encourage, and often require their students to take a substantial number of classes in topics which may not directly relate to their vocational goals, in an effort to provide a "well-rounded" education.

Official Testing: Standardized admissions testing (SAT's or ACT's) which students must request to be sent directly from the College Board or ACT to the college or university.

Post-Secondary: after high school

Regular decision: This application will have a deadline and set time for review. Notification of a decision will generally arrive home in the first week of April.

Rolling Admissions: Applications are reviewed according to the date by which completed materials are received. Submitting a rolling application early is advisable.

Supplements: When using the Common Applications, schools may require, in addition to the electronic application, supplementary materials- Teacher Evaluation, School Report, Mid- Year Reports or an additional form for the student to complete.

Undergraduate degree: It is the first level of university degrees, for example, a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration or Bachelor of Science. Higher levels of university degrees are the master and doctoral levels, also referred to as graduate degrees. (www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm)

Wait list: A regular applicant who cannot be offered acceptance at decision time, but may be offered an acceptance at a later date.

VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

PDE Report- Jobs for the Future

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/career_edu/lib/career_edu/2005JobsForTheFutureRpt.pdf

Jobs for the Future: Official Site- Creating Strategies for Educational and Economic Opportunity <http://www.jff.org/>

BCTE- The Bureau of Career and Technical Education:

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/career_edu/site/default.asp

Education Planner: One stop career and college-planning website for students.

<http://educationplanner.com>

PA Statewide High Priority Occupations:

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/career_edu/lib/career_edu/2006HPO-CIPCcrosswalk.pdf

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency: PHEAA powered by AES- Helping to create access to education in Pennsylvania <http://www.pheaa.org/>

Educacionsuperior: Addressing the post-secondary needs of Spanish-speaking populations

<http://www.educacionsuperior.org/>

Team Pennsylvania Career Link: Pennsylvania Career Link is a cooperative effort to provide con- stop delivery of career services to job seekers, employers and other interested individuals.

<http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.ud>

MILITARY

Several different opportunities exist for students interested in pursuing a military career or military service after graduation.

- Military academies offer a very selective and physically rigorous program for highly motivated students. Please refer to each individual Academy's website for the most accurate and up-to-date information.
 - United States Military Academy (West Point): <http://admissions.usma.edu>
 - United States Air Force Academy: <http://academyadmissions.com>
 - United States Naval Academy (Annapolis): <http://www.usna.edu>
 - United States Merchant Marine Academy: www.usmma.edu
 - Coast Guard Academy: www.cga.edu

- Academy Application Timeline:
 - October
 - Attend Academy Night
 - November
 - Continue to investigate military obligation and commitment
 - December/January/February
 - Application process begins for optional Summer Leadership Seminars at each Academy
 - March/April/May/June
 - Open your Academy file by completing a Preliminary Application online
 - Attend optional Summer Leadership Seminar
 - Write to your Congressman, Senators and the Vice President to receive a Nomination packet. (Nominations are only required for admittance to West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy.)
 - July/August/September/October (Senior year)
 - Complete Academy application online
 - Complete and submit Nomination applications by indicated deadlines
 - Follow directions (received after application is processed) to schedule and complete your Candidate Fitness Assessment and DODMERB medical exam
 - November/December (Senior year)
 - Interview with Congressman and Senators' staffs to compete for a Nomination
 - December – May (Senior year)
 - Notification of Nomination
 - Notification of Offer of Appointment
 - If accepting appointment, begin process of obtaining background criminal checks to receive military clearance
 - June (Senior year)
 - Immediately following graduation, report to Academy to begin summer training

- Non-Academy military options: Opportunities exist to obtain a civilian education with a military component.
 - Schools like VMI, The Citadel, Texas A&M and Norwich University have an integrated Corps of Cadets program that provides students with a liberal arts education concomitant with military, physical and leadership training. Approximately 40% of the student body/Corps of Cadets choose to enter the

- military upon graduation. Traditional college application procedures and deadlines are followed.
- ROTC is a scholarship program providing tuition and fee assistance for students interested in committing to pursue a military career after college. ROTC scholarship applications must be completed in addition to college applications. Students designate ROTC campus selections, BUT receiving an ROTC scholarship does NOT guarantee acceptance to that college or university. Additional information can be found on each service's ROTC website.
- Military enlistment
 - Students can contact a military recruiter and enter either Active Duty or Reserve (National Guard) duty upon receipt of their high school diploma or GED.

UNDECIDED?



High school students are not always clear about what their next step should be after graduation. Feelings of ambivalence and just a general sense of uncertainty about your future is natural. Exploring all of your options can be a great kickoff to making a well-thought out decision. Use this time to reflect on your interests, skills, values and future goals.

- Use the Discover Program to explore your values, interests and skills
 - From any computer with internet capabilities, logon to:
www.act.org/discover/login
 - Your User I.D. and password are on file in the Counseling Center if you have misplaced them.
 - Counseling Center staff is available to help you use the program should you need a refresher course.
- Taking time off before college or work—the Gap Year experience
 - Below is a list of resources you can explore if you are considering taking a year off before college or work.
 - City Year is one of over 1,000 local and national AmeriCorps programs across the country. City Year brings together young adults, ages 17 to 24, from diverse ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds for a demanding year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement to meet the nation's critical need in areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human services in cities throughout the United States (cityyear.org).
 - Youth for Understanding (YFU) is a non-profit educational organization which offers opportunities for young people around the world to spend a summer, semester or year with a host family in another culture (www.yfu.org).
 - Interested in giving some time in order to pay for education? AmeriCorps is for people at least 17 years of age who wish to learn new skills, acquire leadership, and gain a sense of satisfaction from taking on responsibilities that directly affect peoples' lives. Members receive a modest living allowance and health coverage while in the program. After a year of service, they may receive education awards of nearly \$5,000 to finance their education (americorps.org).
 - Taking Time Off, by Colin Hall and Ron Lieber
 - The UnCollege Alternative: Your Guide to Incredible Careers and Amazing Adventures Outside College, by Danielle Kwatinetz Wood
 - Taking a Gap Year, by Susan Griffith
- Using Your Job as a Career Exploration Tool
 - Take some time to think about what kind of work you might like to do.
 - Find a summer job or part-time job during the school year
 - Ask questions of your manager
 - Do you see yourself there in 5 years? 10 years?
 - What kinds of opportunities for advancement are there?

Whatever your ultimate decision, spend your junior and senior years exploring all of your options and opportunities. Don't close any doors!

Autobiographical Sketch

Name: _____ Date _____

Reason for Letter of Recommendation: _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to learn more about you so that I can write an accurate and thoughtful letter of recommendation. This form will also help you to summarize and organize information about yourself. Please be honest and reflective. The quality of the letter I can write may be determined by the quality of information you provide. This information is due to your counselor a minimum of **10 schooldays** prior to the sending date. Please provide answers on an additional sheet of paper.

At this point, what colleges/ universities are you considering applying to? Please indicate if they are reach (R), target (T) or safety schools (S).

Looking Back: Assessing your High School experience and performance

- 1) How would you describe your high school experience? A) Academically? B) Personally?
- 2) Do you believe your transcript is an accurate reflection of your ability? Yes/ No If no, please comment?
- 3) What factors, if any (personal, family, social, academic) contributed to your performance positively or negatively?
- 4) What is your strongest subject or elective and why?
- 5) Have there been any events, circumstances or experiences that have had a major impact on your way of **thinking (i.e. values, morals, ethics)**?
- 6) What are your most significant contributions to UHS? How will UHS be different because of you?
- 7) What do you choose to learn on your own? Please consider interests pursued beyond class assignments. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
- 8) How does academic pressure influence you?
- 9) Do you consider yourself to be independent in some ways? Give an example of how you demonstrate your independence.
- 10) If you were to write a letter of recommendation for yourself to a college, what would you be certain to include?
- 11) Please attach an activity resume including any athletics, clubs, committees, leadership positions, employment and activities independent of UHS in which you have participated. Why did you choose these activities during your high school career?

Looking Forward

- 12) It is the job of an admission representative to “fit” students with the mission of the college/university. Consider the missions of your chosen schools and explain how and why you are a good match for them.
- 13) What subject area(s) are you looking forward to investigating in college? Have you had an experience, which has informed/influenced this idea?
- 14) If there is one area in which you hope to become a more successful student, what would it be and why (for example, time management, study skills, self- advocacy etc.)?
- 15) List 4-6 adjectives that you would use to describe you. Please give an example of each one.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

Unionville High School Permission to Release Information

I _____ authorize the high school principal or his designee to release information
(Parent, guardian or 18 year old student)
regarding _____ as requested to:
Student name birth date graduation date

Name of Institution or Scholarship Program: _____

Mailing Address of Institution or Scholarship Program: _____

Authorization to send records from the Counseling Center (please check)

- _____ Transcript including grades and cumulative GPA
 - _____ Test scores: _____ SAT I _____ SAT II _____ ACT _____ PSSA _____ TOEFL
 - _____ Secondary School Report or Counselor Evaluation Form (only if required by college)
 - _____ Recommendations (please list names of any teacher, counselor or person whose letter you want sent)
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Student application materials to be sent from the Counseling Center (please check)

- _____ Essay(s) or Personal Statement
- _____ Envelope (pre-addressed 10 x 13 mailing envelope- without return address)
- _____ 5 stamps (do not affix to envelope)
- _____ Check for the college application fee
- _____ Other (please specify):

Application (please check)

- _____ Submitted online or _____ Paper application (specify parts if applicable)
- _____ Common Application or _____ College designated application

If you used the Common Application, are there any supplemental forms to accompany the application? Y / N

Application deadline date for this institution or scholarship program is: _____
(Circle either **received by** or **postmarked by**)

Signature of Student

Signature of Parent or Guardian if student is under 18

For office use only- Date received in Counseling Center _____
Date sent from Counseling Center _____

Request for Letter of Recommendation

Name: _____ Recommender: _____

Course/ activity taken with this recommender: _____ Final Grade: _____

Date I am submitting request: _____ Possible major: _____

Please complete the recommendation by: _____

Type of recommendation requested: ____ Academic ____ Athletic ____ Other

Please return the recommendation in the following way to maintain confidentiality:

____ Return to school counselor (circle) Christy Deady Hilden Beckman Lyles Spiegel

____ Send directly to college (addressed, stamped envelope attached)

____ Return letter to student in a sealed envelope with signature of writer across seal

Colleges for which I am requesting a recommendation:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

The effort and detail you put into completing this form can affect the recommendation that is written for you. On a separate sheet of paper, please answer the following questions.

1. Of all your advisors and teachers, why did you select me to write your letter of recommendation?
2. Think about the activity or class you took with me as a whole. What is distinct about you that you might want me to emphasize in my letter?
3. What was your favorite part of the activity or course you took with me?
4. What was the most challenging part of my class or activity for you and how did you respond? How will those characteristics make you a successful college student?
5. What methods of teaching engage your interest and effort the most? Please describe and explain.
6. How and why did you choose the above colleges? Please explain why you believe you match the missions of the particular schools you have selected or are considering. If you don't have specific schools, explain what you are looking for in a college.
7. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself? Please give an example or explanation for each.
8. Five years from now, where do you think you will be and how will you get there? Please do not feel obligated to focus on my class or activity (or even know exact details); rather it can be a mixture of career and personal goals.
9. What is the most interesting book or article you have read recently and why?
10. If you were to write a letter of recommendation for yourself to a college, what would you be certain to include?
11. What quote do you live by and why is it particularly appealing to you? Give an example of when these words influenced your way of thinking.

- ❑ Please list all activities, awards, honors and/or achievements (school-related and non-school related) attained while at UHS; include the length of time.
- ❑ **Please give this completed request to recommender 4 weeks prior to the date by which the recommendation needs to be completed and submitted to the Counseling Center.**

Parent Brag Sheet

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As we prepare to write a letter of recommendation for your child, we are seeking your thoughts and feelings about your child's educational performance and personal growth during high school. We would be grateful if you would help us by responding to the following questions. Feel free to be funny, serious, honest, and proud! Your anecdotes, observations, and insights are all welcome. **Please return this form to your child's school counselor by 10/1.**

Name of Student: _____

1. What do you consider to be the outstanding accomplishments of your child during the past three years? Why did you select these as most important?

2. In what areas has your child shown the most personal development and growth during the past few years?

3. What do you consider to be his/her outstanding personality traits?

4. If you had to describe your son/daughter in five adjectives, what would they be and why?

5. Are there any unusual or personal circumstances which have affected your child's educational or personal experiences?

Parent Signature

Please return this to your child's School Counselor if he/she needs a Counselor Letter of Recommendation as part of their college application.