

# THE ROAD TO COLLEGE

*How Notre Dame Academy Prepares You  
For College And Beyond*



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**After receiving the following email from a very grateful parent, and several other testimonials from NDA alumnae, we sat down with Guidance & College Planning Counselor Mr. Bardier to find out what sets the Academy apart when it comes to preparing our students for college and beyond...**

*Hello Mr. Bardier:*

*As an alumna and mother, I am constantly looking at improvements or strengths of our school to get the word out and let people know we are on the rise. Your commitment to these girls and your knowledge of the college admission process should be shouted from the roof tops!!*

*I am already less anxious than I was for my son. I know his high school had many more students to help, but last night I felt at ease and more ready for my daughter's journey than I ever did for my son.*

*Nice work. Look forward to chatting more about my daughter's next 5 years!!*

*Thanks*

*Carolyn Baltas*

### **When does the college process start with our students?**

The process starts at the end of their Freshman year where students are introduced to the *Naviance*/Student-Family Connection planning tool that the school utilizes for college planning. They also begin to take and review college standardized testing including College Boards PSAT for grades 9 and 11, and Pre-ACTs for grade 10. During Sophomore year, in Sophomore Seminar class, we focus on developing and identifying a student's skills, strengths, and interests through *Naviance*'s 'Achieve Works' –Career Interests Profile and Learning Style Inventory. We research career choices which serve as an important introduction to college majors and the college selection process. By doing this, students can also begin to think of what Love-In-Action Community Service they will choose and if that ties into a possible career path or interest. Many students begin their college searches by the end of Sophomore year and start to visit colleges over their upcoming spring and summer vacations.

### **How does the school assist students and their families once it is time to start applying to colleges?**

I'm glad you said 'the school' because it really is a school wide effort between guidance, faculty, and staff to make sure that the girls are completely prepared for the college planning process. It actually begins with many of our sophomores visiting colleges over their summer vacation and this process transitions into Junior Seminar that begins second term. During Junior Seminar, we review PSAT, Pre-ACT testing results, discuss test preparation and upcoming winter and spring test dates. Juniors continue to update their *Naviance* Resume, identify teachers who will write their college recommendations with their Resume and a Teacher's Recommendation Form. Our teachers receive their 'recommendation packet' before the end of our school year. This process affords our teachers the opportunity to write our seniors' recommendations over the summer. By the end of September, our teachers are ready to upload and send each of their senior's recommendation.



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Juniors also provide guidance counselors with a self-recommendation and peer recommendation which are used by our counselors to personalize each student's guidance counselor college letter of recommendation. Parents are also invited to provide counselors with their insights through a parent's 'Brag Letter'. A parent's insight, and especially their stories, provide our guidance counselors with a wealth of information that assist counselors to further personalize a senior's letter of recommendation. Guidance counselor letters of recommendation are also written over the summer and ready to upload and send in September.

The 'Common Application' is the first 'go to' application among our seniors. There are over 1,000 colleges that accept this application. One of the advantages of the Common Application is that Juniors can work on the Senior common application and then roll it over on August 1<sup>st</sup> to their application. The Common Application also serves as a template for non Common Application Schools. The Common Application Support Staff usually announce the major Essay Prompts by February/March. This information is shared with Juniors, parents, and our wonderful English teachers who work with our juniors in writing their Common Application Major Essay as an assignment for 4<sup>th</sup> Term. All of our Juniors will have finalized their major college essay before they leave school for summer vacation. We continue to meet and work with our Juniors and their parents to narrow their list of colleges and post-secondary school plans. Through individual guidance appointments, parent guidance appointments, our Guidance Seminars, and College Parents Night Programs, we strive to help each of our students create a plan for beyond Notre Dame Academy. We also strive to personalize this process with each of our students.

### **When are parents brought into the process?**

Parents are an integral part of this process. From scheduling college visits, to paying for the testing and applications fees, to completing the various financial aid application forms and ultimately assisting their daughter in finalizing her choice of school and program. We welcome parents to reach out to us through our College Information Program Nights, to individual guidance appointments and telephone calls.

The college and financial aid application process can be daunting to navigate especially if it's your first time doing it, or even if it's your second time as you can see from Mrs. Baltas's email. Our goal at NDA is to do whatever we can in order to minimize the stress of this process. Just think, one major application, The Common Application, completed in the junior year; major college essay completed before our juniors leave school for summer vacation, teachers chosen and recommendations written over the summer, counselors recommendations ready to go for the start of senior year, SAT and or ACT Testing scheduled for late winter or early spring and college list of schools being narrowed after spring and summer college visits and everything is brought into focus with the start of Senior Seminar at the start of a new school year. This process has served us well over many years at NDA. Most of our Seniors have processed all of their applications by mid-October. All Seniors have completed their college applications by mid-November affording them the opportunity to begin receiving their college acceptances in December and January. The effort and cooperation of all of us, our students, parents, teachers, and guidance staff make all of this happen; a process with less stress and happy smiles during the Holidays!



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- Freshman Seminar
- Intro to *Naviance*/Student - Family planning tool.
- Review of standardized testing

- Sophomore Seminar
- Developing & Identifying skills, strengths, and interests
- Research career choices
- Begin College Search

- Junior Seminar
- Common Application
- Review PSAT & ACTs
- Self Evaluations
- Peer Evaluations
- Teacher Recommendations
- College Essays
- College Planning Night
- College Visits

- Senior Seminar
- Process College Applications
- Begin receiving acceptance letters!

**FRESHMAN YEAR**

**SOPHOMORE YEAR**

**JUNIOR YEAR**

**SENIOR YEAR**