WELCOME TO COLLEGE NIGHT!

The Governor’s School for the Arts
KEEP CALM AND GET INTO COLLEGE
There is no such thing as a linear career path.
REFRAME: What do you want to grow into?
Preparation is Key

- Create your personal compass
- Gather lots of information and prioritize your must-have items, including budget limits (make it fun!)
- Network (v.) and get feedback and advice from people you trust
- Prepare your résumé – Performance AND Business
- Visit campus and audition for programs
- Take standardized tests (not always required for admission, but may help with financial aid)
- Write an essay (not always required for admission, but may help if you have a bad audition)
- Submit your application and transcript
- Apply for aid and scholarships (FAFSA, institutional aid, community grants, etc.)
- Get a part time job and take on more responsibility
- Learn the value of time and learn to manage it
- You don’t have to know everything (yet)
- Plan, Prepare, Perform (execute the plan)
Changes with College admissions

- Colleges are becoming more selective
- Online applications and the common app
- The average number of applications has increased
  - This means that readers are spending less time with each application
  - More emphasis on academic strength than class rank and recommendations
- Spend more time on your admission essay and supplemental materials for your discipline!

Get a [http://www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) account early!
Accounts available for parents to stay up to speed.
Higher Education in the Arts

Types of Programs
- Private
- Public
- 2 year, 4 year, accelerated 5 years with Masters Overseas programs (maybe not during covid…)

Undergraduate Degrees
- AA
- BFA, BA, BM (bachelor of music)

120 Credits to graduate from most schools
BFA- more credits in the arts than a BA
**College Research!**

It is never too early to start your college research!

Be aware that items like tuition, average GPA & SAT, application fees are subject to change yearly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Research Worksheet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life (Size and location)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission (Percentile accepted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA and SAT score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Action or Decision available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Admission Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate amount of financial AID Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My preferred degree program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration option 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration option 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Criteria:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
If you can’t find the info you need...

Never Assume any information is the same as another college.

Ask an Admissions Representative!

Email is best for response time and tracking.
Some Useful Websites

- http://unifiedauditions.com/
- https://ndeo.org/collegedance
- https://musicschoolcentral.com/university-vs-conservatory/
- http://www.nacacnet.org/
- https://www.princetonreview.com/college-search
ADMISSIONS

Making Sense of it All
How to approach the application process

- Be Yourself: there is no mythical formula for what colleges or universities are seeking
- You never know what it is about you that will stand out
- Understand that the process is holistic
- Get in the driver’s seat: Make sure it is YOUR voice that comes through in the application
- Learn how to articulate your strengths, hopes & experiences
What are the different types of Admission Options?

Restrictive
- Early Decision (ED)
- Restrictive Early Action (REA)

Non-Restrictive
- Regular Decision
- Early Action (EA)
- Rolling Admission
When you want a faster admissions response...

Earlier application period (November)
Earlier decision sent to you (December/January)
Varies for each college, please read their requirements carefully!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EARLY DECISION (ED)</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>EARLY ACTION (EA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You’re <strong>SURE</strong> this is the #1 school for you!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plans are not binding, commit or wait to give a response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Binding decision</strong>, you must withdraw your other applications if accepted <em>and</em> school offers you enough financial aid.</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>You can apply to multiple EA schools.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Early Action Option...

**EARLY ACTION (EA)**

- Plans are not binding, commit or wait to give a response
- You can apply to multiple EA schools

**VS**

**RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA) AKA SINGLE-CHOICE EARLY ACTION**

- Plans are not binding, commit or wait to give a response
- You can apply to only one EA school, once you get a decision you can apply to other EA schools after a certain date
- Schools like Yale and Harvard use these as application options
The Term “Admission”

**REGULAR ADMISSION**

- This deadline is the general admission deadline, schools *may* have different deadlines for scholarship consideration.
- Must have all application materials in by this deadline.
- Usually their FINAL incoming freshman deadline!
- Does *not* give advance notice for decision. Decision letters go out at the same time.

**ROLLING ADMISSION**

- Means “first come, first serve” school and can apply to any of their decision types.
- The applicant’s files are evaluated when complete and a decision is sent soon after.
- Colleges often have admissions cycles that extended into summer.
- Complete your application as early as possible; available spaces may fill!
Prioritize your applications

- Early Decision
- Single-Choice Early Action
- Early Action
- Schools with Specific scholarships deadlines
- Regular Decision
Make an admissions tracker!

Making your high school homework/assignment deadlines is practice for college application season!
Ready to apply!
Application

Online: University Website Or Common Application

Basic Contents

- Personal Information
- Essay(s) (Scholarship extras)
- Resume/Extracurriculars
- References
- Academic Records
- Supplemental Materials

Materials Sent Separately

- SAT or ACT scores
- Transcripts
- AP/IB Scores
- Teacher Recommendations
- GSA Transcripts
- Degree Required Materials (Scholarship extras)

Arts Related

- Portfolio Review, Audition Date, Interview
Many schools not requiring standardized tests (SAT/ACT)

Universities are accepting ONLINE auditions and interviews.

Holding virtual auditions.

Look closely at each website to find requirements for how to submit materials.

Many want you to complete the application first and then upload materials at a later date.
What the colleges look for

- Is there clear evidence of intellectual engagement?
- What kind of impact will this student have on our campus?
- What does this student want to get from our university?
- What is the student like personality – wise?
Holistic Review

- Academic Information
- Extra-Curricular Involvement
- Recommendations
- Essays
- Possible Interview
BREAKDOWN OF APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Extra-Curricular Activities
- Not about “What” - it’s about “Why”
- Thoughtful use of space provided on the application.
- It’s what you are passionate about that matters.

Essays/Personal Statement
- Not “what should I write about” but “what should someone know about me.”
- If your best friend read your essay, without you telling them, would they know you wrote it?

School-Specific Essays
- Always answer the question you’ve been asked.
- Make it specific to the university which you are applying - Do your research!
ESSAY TIPS & TRICKS
(Shared from University Admissions Officers)

1. **Offer Insight**: recount a powerful experience or significant relationship that has changed your perspective or challenged your beliefs.
2. **Avoid the Obvious**: use the essay to share your reflections and aspects about you that are not obvious from your application.
3. **Avoid Controversial Topics**: discussion of social and political topics should be tied to your interests, previous experiences, or your unique world view.
4. **Demonstrate your Intellectual Interests**: consider writing about your response to works of a particular author, research in certain areas, or ways in which you as a student have reached beyond your curriculum.
5. **Write, Rewrite, Revise**: treat your college essay as an example of your college readiness.

Dr. Shelly is available to assist you with essays and the editing process!
Ready! Set! Go!

- The application:
  - Read it carefully first
  - Print out an application to use as a master that has all necessary info

- Transcripts:
  - Request early from both HS and GSA

- Recommendations
  - Create a packet for your teacher: A cover letter, resume and everything they need to make your reference.
  - Give them 3-4 weeks to complete

- The Essay
  - Work on it! Have it reviewed!

Nurture relationships with your teachers for future recommendations!
Staying Organized is Essential!

- Keep a binder specifically for college admission
- Section off the different colleges you are applying to
- Keep the checklist for each college updated!

Students applying to pre-college programs need to be equally organized!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Checklist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get the application online or hardcopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make a note of the regular application deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make a note of the early application deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make a note for their scholarship deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending Transcripts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Request high school transcript sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Request GSA transcript (provide stamped envelope to the office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Request midyear grade report sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending Test Scores:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Take/retake required recommended tests (e.g., SAT Subject Tests, AP exams, IB exams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Take an admission test, if required (e.g., TOEFL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Send admission-test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Send other test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare Arts Related Materials:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have it reviewed by GSA teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Request Portfolio review/Schedule audition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prepare for in person review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Submit final Arts related supplements for application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request recommendation letters and include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cover Letter including info on school deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Resume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Portfolio or images of performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stamped and addressed envelopes, or online links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Send thank-you notes to recommendation writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions essay/supplements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Draft initial essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Proofread essay for spelling and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have two people read your essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Admissions Resources

- Your high school counselor
- College websites’ admissions pages
  - Admissions rep/counselor for your degree program
  - FAQ pages specific to their admissions process
- GSA Full Time Faculty
- Online Resources:
  - National Association for College Admission Counseling
    (http://www.nacacnet.org: Student and parent resources)

College open houses are some of the best resources for understanding admissions processes! Some offer virtual options.
FINANCIAL AID

**DO**

- Gather your materials:
  - Tax returns for you and/or your parents
  - Asset records for you and/or your parents, including bank statements and investments
  - Social Security numbers for you and your parents
  - Driver's license or government ID
  - Federal school code for the schools you will be applying to
  - FSA ID

**DON'T**

- Skip the FAFSA. Most people qualify for some financial aid, and it's the first step toward paying for college.

**DO**

- Fill out the application early.
  - Application will be available October 1
  - Financial aid at some schools is first come, first served, so apply as early as possible.

- Fill out the FAFSA online.
  - It takes about 30 minutes
  - Take advantage of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to automatically transfer your tax info.
WHY ACCOUNT OWNERSHIP MATTERS

Parent-owned

College savings held in a parent’s name have less impact on an application for needs-based financial aid.¹

Student-owned

College savings held in the student’s name can negatively affect how much financial aid the student is eligible for.²

HOW TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

529 College Savings Plans/529 Prepaid Tuition Plans

Parent-owned plans used to cover the dependent’s future education expenses (elementary, secondary, or college).³

Custodial Accounts (UTMA/UGMA)⁴

Student-owned accounts set up for a dependent and administered by a legal guardian.
FAFSA

FAFSA:
- “Free Application for Federal Student Aid”
- Used to apply for:
  - Federal Financial Aid
  - Grants
  - Student Loans
  - Work Study

Applications opened October 1st! Online Application or call for a paper application to be mailed to you.

Apply even if don’t think you are eligible, schools still look at the results to award non-federal aid.

Many community colleges have individuals who will assist you with this process.

http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/

Article in the Virginian Pilot from 9/26/21:
http://digitaledition.pilotonline.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=1b09412f-e316-44ac-9523-025b64a5b5a0
Financial Aid

Federal Student Aid- Financial Aid Toolkit
QuestBridge
Federal Student Aid
Collegedata.com
Access College Foundation
CSS Financial Aid

Resources from Senator Mark Warner’s office:
https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/student-resources#before
Tips for getting FAFSA ready

- Read the new guidelines CAREFULLY!
- Get your W2 and financial records together
  - You can submit with an estimated income and update FAFSA with official W2 later. Give the best estimate possible!
- Check the additional handout provided.
School Scholarships

- Candidate selections for scholarships differ between institutions
- Need-based vs Merit-based scholarships
- Read the deadlines carefully. To be considered for School Scholarships you may have to apply ahead of the regular admission deadline.
- Check to make sure you are fulfilling scholarship requirements in the application: Specific Essays? Additional materials?
- Ask an admissions counselor if you can’t find the information you are looking for.
IN THE MEANTIME

- Keep your contact information up to date
- Continue with college visits. Call ahead for appointments with financial aid, admissions, advisors
- Research pre-college programs for next summer
- Don’t forget thank-you notes
- Take the SAT I, SAT Subject Tests and ACT
- Work on essays & review application procedures for selected colleges
- Decide if you are going to apply under Early Decision or Early Action
- Read your college mail & send reply cards
I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen.

~Frank Lloyd Wright