

Special interest or considerations: what about my student's special considerations?
Visual and performing arts candidates, prospective student athletic recruits, and students
who have accommodations for disabilities

Sophomore Parent Newsletter #6 from
New Trier's Post-High School Counseling Office

All students are encouraged to keep a record of activity involvement in and outside of the school setting. Managing to compile this information early and continuously in your student's high school career will likely make this process significantly easier. Activities from ninth grade on, both inside and outside of high school should be included.

This newsletter is designed to provide tips for candidates who hope to participate in the visual or performing arts or college athletics, or who hope to maintain or expand their disability services in a college setting.

Students in the arts

Students who may be interested in pursuing the visual arts, studio arts, film, or architecture programs in college might begin by maintaining a compilation of pieces in various media. What colleges require might vary a bit from year to year, but students and parents may wish to peruse some college websites to have a preliminary idea about what to expect. Take photographs of all pieces and store both the pieces and the pictures securely. Although in many cases students are still developing their talents and may not believe their earlier work demonstrates their true talent, storing photos or electronic copies securely may prove beneficial later. While the majority of film and architecture programs do not require portfolios, some do have specific pieces required for admission.

The same can be said for candidates who wish to major in the performing arts. Keeping an accurate, up-to-date list of musical pieces mastered and performed, dances performed or choreographed, roles played on stage, and details of the dates of such performances will save much time later. Keep all show programs for reference. New Trier's directing project in the senior year is designed to be a portfolio for college admission.

Student athletes

The NCAA allows contact with Division I recruits beginning September first of the junior year. If a student's coach thinks he or she might be a candidate for recruitment, encourage your student to check out NCAA.org and the sports sections of some college websites to determine how competitive their times are, and who will graduate from certain programs so you can determine what spots in those programs might be available. For those students already motivated to check out specific colleges, there may be athletic contact forms to complete on the websites of those colleges of interest. Division III athletes do not have such restrictions regarding coach contact but still might wish to fill out interest forms on college websites and speak with their coaches here to determine if they might be DI or DIII recruits. Remember this is extremely early in the process and students are still developing their skills.

Prospective college athletes should also compile an athletic resume with their academic and athletic information. Keep awards and personal records organized and accessible, and consider participating in summer sports camps to fine-tune skills and get the student in front of college coaches. Students should speak with their New Trier and any club coaches for recommendations, and know that these camps are certainly not required for students to be recruited by college coaches.

Students who receive disability accommodations

Students with disabilities and who receive accommodations in an educational setting probably know more about their educational strengths and weaknesses than their classmates. Although these students typically do not need to do anything differently in the college application process, if they hope to receive accommodations in college, they should be prepared to be able to articulate how they learn and what accommodations they use. Recent documentation of a diagnosed disability in the form of educational testing is usually needed for students to qualify for services in college; many colleges request educational testing within three to five years of the student's enrollment. In addition, registering for standardized college admission testing with accommodations requires students to register earlier than the published deadlines, as ACT and the College Board (SAT) have to review each case before accommodations are determined. New Trier's testing coordinator will lead each family through this process next fall; watch for that mailing and keep that information for reference.

All students

While we believe students should do some research before conducting college visits to make sure that the college is a good fit, we recognize that students don't begin the formal college search until late next year. We do that so that we have half of the student's academic record completed and some standardized test scores; however, if your student wishes to begin the search early, here are some tips:

First, assess your student's strengths and areas that might be improved. What are the academic strengths and academic courses your student likes? What are the extracurricular areas where your student excels, and where your student would like to continue to participate in college? Talk realistically about what college entails in terms of academic and personal independence. Talk about *why* your student is going to college and let your child consider what they have gotten out of high school so far and what they anticipate getting out of college. The next newsletter will have some specific conversation starters to assess the New Trier experience – that may be extrapolated into considering the college experience.

Consider local colleges to visit to help your student get a feel for the college setting and to begin the conversation at home. Lake Forest College, Northwestern, Loyola, DePaul, the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Chicago are some close options, and can help your student see the differences in size, location, academics, and co-curriculars.

We don't really expect anyone to have visited colleges before the junior year, but if your student is interested and you have the time, call one or more of these college's admission office. Tell them when you'd like to visit and ask to attend an information session and have a student-led tour. Very few colleges do individual meetings anymore – we don't like to call them interviews, as the student is not on the spot.

Any early college visits for students should include, as appropriate, a stop in the office for students with disabilities, a meeting with a faculty member in the studio arts, and possibly a music lesson with a college faculty member for prospective music majors. Prospective athletes might be able to meet with a coach or athletic representative. This is all in addition to registering for the information session and going on the campus tour. Typically, campus

visits do not happen until the second semester of the junior year and throughout the senior year, so do not worry that you have to do this now!

Please know that your student's teachers, coaches, and post-high school counselor at New Trier have a wealth of experience in helping students with these special tasks, and look forward to responding to any questions students or parents might have.

So while the anxiety about these special circumstances may grow, the post-high school counseling process begins the same way and at the same time for all. Being prepared with your student's specific background and accomplishments will pave the way.

All previous newsletters are available on the New Trier post-high school website, under the link "Sophomore Information" on the right-hand side.