

# Factors in College Admission

Most colleges take numerous factors into account in college admission. There is no general agreement about which of these factors is most important; individual schools weigh them differently. Factors include:

- **Coursework.** Generally, academic rigor is a key factor in admissions. Colleges want students who have challenged themselves. If honors and AP classes are offered, schools like to see a student who has attempted these classes.
- **GPA.** The grade point average most schools consider for admissions spans freshmen year to the fall of senior year. UC and CSU campuses consider only classes your sophomore and junior years. HHS sends weighted grades, but colleges and universities weight them according to their own systems.
- **Standardized Test Scores.** Most schools require the SAT or ACT Plus Writing. UCs and other selective schools also require SAT Subject Tests.
- **Application Questions and Essays.** Each school evaluates the college application and essays differently. What's important is that the questions and essays be well-written and contain an insight into the student. Do not reiterate in your essay what has been said elsewhere in the application.
- **Activities/Community Service.** Colleges and universities are looking for activities that demonstrate an interest or contribution to the school, community, or greater good. Extracurricular activities also show that a student is well rounded and possesses time management skills. Schools look for leadership and commitment to an organization or activity over a period of years, rather than a large number of clubs with minimal involvement. Quality beats quantity. Activities that involve an academic component (i.e., Model UN, Academic Decathlon, Yearbook, and Journalism) are generally highly regarded.
- **Honors and Awards.** These awards can be academic, community, or athletic. AP Scholar and National Merit Scholar, for example, carry great weight. Awards and recognitions demonstrate interest, achievement, and leadership. Students should be responsible to keep records of their honors and awards.
- **Letters of Recommendation.** Many selective schools require teacher and counselor recommendations. Recommendations show how others view you. Be sure to choose recommenders wisely.
- **Interviews.** Many selective private schools require or recommend interviews.
- **Other Factors.** Other factors can include ethnicity, geographic location, alumni relationship, major/college applied to, and special talents and skills.