



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

SEPTEMBER 2015

Dear Senior Student and Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to your senior year!!!! We are excited to help you through the process of college admissions, financial aid, NCAA and NAIA eligibility (if applicable). Part of our job is to assist you with selecting schools that best fit your student profile. This process includes submitting documents – like transcripts, school profile, letters of recommendation – when they have been appropriately requested. Our goal is to ensure every student has a post graduation goal that meets their personal needs as well as their academic and career goals.

The Student Services office at Hudson Catholic is here to help in any way we can to ensure that you complete the college admissions process as seamlessly as possible. However, you the student are the most vital part of the process. We are here to guide you with the college process but we cannot complete the process for you. It is important that you keep track of major deadlines and requirements as listed for your college/university choices and financial aid applications, as well as follow the appropriate procedures for requesting documents.

This packet will outline the basic information you need to successfully complete this school year. All students will meet with their counselor in small groups in September to review this packet, Family Connection and the process for completing all that is needed during senior year. Any student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) can have an individual meeting with their counselor by simply requesting a conference.

Thanks and best wishes for the upcoming senior year!

Sincerely,

Hudson Catholic Student Services

Jill Awad - Students Last Names Li-Z

201-332-5970 Ext. 24

jawad@hudsoncatholic.org

Renee Johnston - Students Last Names A - Le

201-332-5970 Ext. 25

rjohnston@hudsoncatholic.org



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

**2015 SENIOR ORIENTATION PACKET
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

KEY NOTES FOR SENIOR YEAR-----PAGE 3

SENIOR YEAR MONTHLY TIMELINE-----PAGE 4 - 5

FAMILY CONNECTION-----PAGE 6

ADMISSIONS AND APPLICATIONS-----PAGE 7

DOCUMENT REQUEST PROCESS-----PAGE 8

NOTABLE APPLICATION DEADLINES-----PAGE 9

FINANCIAL AID-----PAGE 10

COLLEGE ATHLETICS-----PAGE 11 - 12

STANDARDIZED TESTING-----PAGE 13 - 14

COLLEGE ESSAYS-----PAGE 15 - 17

ONLINE RESOURCES-----PAGE 18



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

KEY NOTES FOR THIS YEAR

Waivers are available for both the SAT and ACT tests. These waivers will also waive application fees for up to four colleges/universities. ***Your family must meet a maximum income qualifier in order to get a waiver.*** If you believe you qualify for a standardized test waiver, please speak with your counselor.

Application deadlines and requirements vary by school. Please make sure you are clear on what is needed for each school you intend to apply to. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of all application requirements and deadlines. Read and review all documents carefully, missing a deadline or failing to submit required documentation can result in loss of admissions or financial aid.

The FAFSA is a **FREE** application for federal student financial aid. You do not have to pay anything to apply for financial aid from the federal government. The first date you can complete your FAFSA application is **1/1/16** – get this done quickly to qualify for the maximum aid amount.

Be careful with social media presence – it is not unusual for admissions officers to review Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc to determine who you are as a person. Remember, once you put it on the internet, you cannot get it back. Make sure you do not have anything out there that can cause you trouble later.... Rule of thumb, if your mother would not want to see you doing it, you should not have it out there for the rest of the world to see!!!

Take the time to visit the campus for any school you have a real interest in – do not make a final decision based on websites and brochures. These are created to advertise the best things about a college! The only way to get the “real feel” for a college campus is to actually visit!!!!



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

SEPTEMBER:

- ❖ Parents should attend the **Senior Parent Night (includes NCAA info)** on **September 22 at 7pm** in the Cafeteria.
- ❖ Finalize your list of colleges. Be sure to list “safety” colleges as well as “match” and “reach” schools. The Student Services department suggests a limit of six to eight colleges.
- ❖ Get organized! Make sure you note the various deadlines for the schools you are applying to, and what is required to complete each application.
- ❖ If you need letters of recommendation from your counselor or teachers, be sure to ask if they will write one on your behalf. Fill out the letter of recommendation survey on Family Connection ASAP – be sure to take your time and be thorough. Remember, it is important to give your recommender at least three weeks notice before your first deadline – that means your survey needs to be completed even sooner.
- ❖ If you plan on applying through an early decision or early action program, get started on your applications right away. Deadlines for early applications tend to be in the month of November.
- ❖ Register for and take October, November, and/or December SAT or ACT tests if appropriate. Please see page 8 for registration information and deadlines.
- ❖ Sign up for college visits at Hudson Catholic through Family Connection. This is a great way to ask questions and get answers from admissions officers. Also, it can help them put a face to your application! The admissions person who visits the school is often the one reviewing your application.

OCTOBER:

- ❖ Continue to place a strong emphasis on your academics. Keep your grades up! All colleges will receive mid-year transcripts and your grades senior year can impact your admission.
- ❖ Begin working on your college essays. Think of topics that focus on your experience and make you stand out from the crowd. For more tips, see pages 10-12.
- ❖ If you take the SAT/ACT again, be sure to send your new scores directly to the colleges you are applying to. Colleges and Universities only consider scores sent directly from the testing agencies to be official.
- ❖ Complete your letter of recommendation survey on Family Connection if you haven't yet done so. Remember – this needs to be complete at least three weeks in advance of your first application deadline.
- ❖ If you are applying to a fine arts or performing arts program, make sure to contact the colleges on your list about auditions and portfolio requirements.



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

NOVEMBER:

- ❖ Submit early decision and early action applications on time (if applicable).
- ❖ Work hard on completing your college essays. Proofread them vigorously for mistakes. Don't hesitate to have someone else proofread for you!
- ❖ Send applications as early as possible for colleges with rolling deadlines (admissions decisions are made as applications are received).
- ❖ If you take the SAT/ACT this month, be sure to send your new scores directly to the colleges you are applying to. Colleges and Universities only consider scores sent directly from the testing agencies to be official.

DECEMBER:

- ❖ Try to wrap up college applications before winter break – you will be glad to have the downtime!
- ❖ Parents should attend **College Bound Student Financial Aid Night** on **December 15th at 7pm** in the Cafeteria.
- ❖ Most colleges have regular decision deadlines in early January or February. It is better to be done in advance than to wait until the last minute!
- ❖ Begin looking for scholarships. Family Connection lists all of the scholarships that come directly to Hudson Catholic, so be sure to check there often.

JANUARY:

- ❖ File FAFSA/CSS Profile if needed. These forms are available online.
- ❖ Hudson Catholic Student Services has a **FAFSA Night** on **January 14th at 7pm** for students and parents, so be sure to attend if you and your parents need help with the FAFSA.
- ❖ Complete all remaining applications!

SPRING:

- ❖ Keep you counselor informed as you get admissions decisions from your colleges!
- ❖ Continue looking for scholarships! Free money is the best money.
- ❖ Discuss options with your parents and counselor.
- ❖ Make your college choice and finalize your decision! Send in your deposit by **May 1st**!
- ❖ Successfully complete your senior year. Your college will request your final grades, and acceptances are contingent upon continued satisfactory performance.
- ❖ **CONGRATULATIONS!** You survived the college process 😊



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

FAMILY CONNECTION

Your Family Connection account provides access to many of the things you need to complete the college admissions process. If you have never logged into Family Connection, use the information provided at the bottom of this page to access your account. If you have logged in before but cannot access your account, please let your counselor know.

Some of the ways you can use Family Connection are listed below:

CAREER SURVEYS – there are 3 different career surveys accessible through Family Connection. If you are completely undecided about the career and/or major you wish to pursue, consider completing one of these surveys. It can give you a place to start.

COLLEGE SEARCH/LOOKUP – there are multiple ways you can use Family Connection to research colleges and universities. There are over 4,600 schools with information listed in the platform.

- *SuperMatch* or *college search* – narrow your options down to a reasonable list of potential schools using your own preferences in multiple categories.
- *college lookup* – search for specific colleges and universities in the system and gather details on their admissions requirements and the school in general.
- *scattergrams, maps* and *acceptance history* – review historical data on students from Hudson Catholic who have applied to specific schools.
- *college match* – find schools based on the information provided to the system about your GPA and standardized test scores.

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCHES – Student Services will upload any scholarship that we receive information about. If scholarship opportunities are applicable to specific students, we will send that information directly to those students via email.

ACCESS TO FORMS/SURVEYS – in order to request letters of recommendation and transcripts, you must complete the required surveys or requests via Family Connection.

- Senior Recommendation Questionnaire – required for letter of recommendation requests
- Parent Response – Senior Rec Questionnaire – supplemental survey for parents to complete for requests of letters of recommendation
- Transcript Requests – required for transcripts to be sent to colleges
- End of year Senior survey – required at the end of the school year to provide post graduation information, including where final transcript will be sent.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER ACCESSED FAMILY CONNECTION:

1. <https://connection.naviance.com/hudsoncrhs>
2. username: last name, first initial, graduation year (2 digits) – (ie, John Smith, class of 2016 is **smithj16**)
3. password: Hudson10 (password is case sensitive)



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

ADMISSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS BASICS

College admission is generally based on overall GPA (grades 9-11), course history and standardized test scores. Take the time to fully review what information Admission Offices provide about the type of student who typically gains acceptance. Most schools provide either the average, or a range of GPA and test scores of students previously accepted into their student body on their website. Use this information to determine if you are an appropriate match for the schools in which you have interest. As you start to finalize your list of schools for which you plan to apply, be sure that your list includes the following:

- Two “safety” schools – colleges/universities you are 100% certain you will be accepted to because you exceed the admissions requirements
- Two “match” or “target” schools – colleges/universities where you meet the admissions requirements and are fairly confident you can be accepted
- Two “reach” schools – colleges/universities you like but do not fully meet admissions requirements

YOUR FINAL LIST OF SCHOOLS SHOULD INCLUDE NO MORE THAN 6-8 SCHOOLS

COMPLETING YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Once you have your list finalized, completely review the application requirements – **ESPECIALLY THE DUE DATES** – to determine what information you need to gather or complete for your admissions file for each school on your list. You are responsible for ensuring that you have a complete admissions application for every college on your list. Below is a list of items you may have to submit in order to complete your college application.

- Completed Application
- Personal Essay
- Official Transcript*
- Official Test Scores (SAT, ACT, SAT II)*
- Teacher Recommendation*
- Counselor Recommendation*
- Resume or Activity Report
- Interview
- Portfolio
- Audition
- School Profile*



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

TRANSCRIPTS AND LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION REQUEST PROCESS

IMPORTANT NOTE: Hudson Catholic does not submit ACT or SAT scores for students. Official test scores must be submitted directly from College Board or ACT. Students are responsible for requesting test scores directly from ACT (www.actstudent.org) or CollegeBoard (www.collegeboard.org) for their admissions applications.

TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS

Any student who wishes to release an official transcript to any college, university, scholarship program NCAA or NAIA must submit a completed transcript release form PRIOR to any educational records being released. Transcript releases MUST BE signed by both the parent/guardian and the student requesting the transcript.

Once a transcript release form has been submitted, actual transcript requests must be done via Family Connection (connection.naviance.com/hudsoncrhs) under the "College" tab. No transcripts will be submitted without a release or an electronic request.

Hudson Catholic will be using eDocs to submit all transcripts this year. A school profile will be sent automatically with every transcript. As a general rule, counselors will send transcripts a week in advance of the application deadline. If you submit your application early, please let your counselor know so we can send your transcripts early, too.

Mid-year (semester) grades will be sent automatically in February to all of the schools for which you requested transcripts to be sent.

PLEASE PROVIDE AT LEAST 15 BUSINESS DAYS (3 WEEKS) NOTICE FOR TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS. THIS MEANS THE REQUEST MUST BE MADE AT LEAST 15 BUSINESS DAYS OR 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE ADMISSIONS DEADLINE.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUESTS

Letters of recommendation can be written by teachers, counselor, employers or community service leaders. You should not request a letter of recommendation from a family member or anyone who does not have experience with you as a student or in a professional setting. Be mindful to ask people who know you as a student, employee or volunteer and a person. They should also be adults with whom you have had a positive experience.

Any student who wishes to have a teacher or counselor write a letter of recommendation on their behalf must complete the Senior Recommendation Survey – accessible via Family Connection (connection.naviance.com/hudsoncrhs). This questionnaire will allow teachers and counselors to write a complete and thoughtful letter of recommendation on your behalf. The effort you put into your questionnaire will be reflected in your letter of recommendation, so answer questions completely and honestly.

PLEASE PROVIDE AT LEAST 15 BUSINESS DAYS (3 WEEKS) NOTICE FOR RECOMMENDATION REQUESTS. THIS MEANS THE REQUEST MUST BE MADE AT LEAST 15 BUSINESS DAYS OR 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE ADMISSIONS DEADLINE.



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

DOCUMENT REQUEST DEADLINES

DUE TO SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS, WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER THIS CHART FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE. WE HAVE LISTED THE MOST COMMON COLLEGE APPLICATION DEADLINES AND ALSO YOUR DEADLINE TO HAVE THESE REQUESTS IN TO STUDENT SERVICES. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

College Application Deadline	MUST Request Transcript/Letter of Rec by:
November 1st	October 9th
November 15th	October 30th
December 1st	November 4th (does not include Thanksgiving Holiday)
December 15th	November 17th (does not include Thanksgiving Holiday)
January 1st	December 1st (does not include Christmas Holiday)
January 15th	December 21st (does not include Christmas Holiday)
February 1st	January 11th
February 15th	January 25th



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

FINANCIAL AID

FINANCIAL AID BASICS

The listed tuition cost for a college or university is often referred to as the “Sticker Price” meaning it is the full tuition, room and board, and additional fees listed for a full year at that particular school. Schools are now required to provide a cost calculator on their website so potential students can have an accurate picture of their costs. However, many students find that this cost is not what they actually have to pay for their education. The reduction of this tuition can occur through grants, scholarships and loans.

- **Grants** can be awarded as merit-based aid for academic or personal achievements by the student or for financial-need as determined through the FAFSA application.
- **Scholarships** can be awarded for any reason and often require applications and submission of certain information.
- **Loans** are offered as part of the financial aid package and are funds loaned to the student or the parent to assist with payment of tuition. Loans must be repaid upon graduation and usually with interest.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid – must be completed in order to have an SAR (Student Aid Report) provided to every school for determination of financial aid. The federal aid awarded is applicable to all schools and individual schools can supplement that aid with grants or scholarships to further assist the family financially.

CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service) – is required by some private colleges and universities in order to receive financial aid. The CSS Profile is completed in addition to the FAFSA through College Board.

Scholarships applications – should be carefully reviewed for requirements and deadlines and submitted on time with any additional documentation requested within the application.

OTHER FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Work Study is a financial aid program that allows students to earn money by working jobs on campus that are set-aside specifically for students in the program.

Athletic Scholarship is financial aid provided to student-athletes who meet eligibility qualifications as set by NCAA in Division I and II athletic programs or NAIA.



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

COLLEGE ATHLETICS - NCAA

NCAA BASICS

The National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) is the guiding body for NCAA Division I, IAA, II and III level athletic programs. The NCAA determines the eligibility for college athletes who wish to participate in sports on Division I, IAA or II levels as they can qualify for athletics scholarships. These scholarships can cover up to 100% of college tuition, room and board and fees. Students who choose to play Division III level sports do not have to meet eligibility guidelines as these programs do not offer athletic scholarships.

In order to qualify for an athletic scholarship, student-athletes must complete the NCAA Eligibility process by registering with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org). There is a \$75 fee associated with the process. Official transcripts for both Junior and Senior year, as well as official test scores, must be submitted with your eligibility application.

DIVISION I AND IAA ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Students must meet the following requirements to qualify for a Division I or IAA athletic scholarship:

Successful completion of 16 Core Classes

Minimum 2.0 GPA (2.3 to play)

Minimum 1010 SAT or 86 ACT sub-score sum (900 or 75 to play)

Note: Ivy League programs are Division IAA, but do not offer athletic scholarships.

DIVISION II ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Students must meet the following requirements to qualify for a Division II athletic scholarship:

Successful completion of 16 Core Classes

Minimum 2.0 GPA

Minimum 860 SAT or 68 ACT sub-score sum

For additional details on these requirements please visit:

http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Quick_Reference_Sheet.pdf



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

COLLEGE ATHLETICS - NAIA

NAIA BASICS

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is the guiding body for all NAIA athletic programs. The NAIA determines the eligibility for college athletes who wish to participate in sports in their conference. Student-athletes can qualify for athletic scholarships which cover up to 100% of college tuition, room and board, and fees.

In order to qualify for an athletic scholarship, student-athletes must complete the NAIA Eligibility process by registering with the NAIA Eligibility Center (<http://www.playnaia.org/eligibility-center>). There is a \$75 fee associated with the process. In addition, official transcripts for both Junior and Senior year, as well as official test scores, must be submitted with your eligibility application.

NAIA ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Students must meet the following requirements to qualify for an NAIA athletic scholarship:

Successful completion of High School

Ranked top 50% in graduating class

Minimum 2.0 GPA

Minimum 860 SAT or 18 ACT Composite Score

For additional details on these requirements, please visit:

http://www.playnaia.org/d/NAIA_GuidefortheCollegeBoundStudent.pdf



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

**2015-2016 STANDARDIZED TEST DATES
AND REGISTRATION DEADLINES**

ACT – Register online at www.actstudent.org

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Deadline (WITH FEE)</u>
September 12th	August 7th	August 21st
October 24th	September 18th	October 2nd
December 12th	November 6th	November 20th
February 6th	January 8th	January 15th
April 9th	March 4th	March 18th
June 11th	May 6th	May 20th

SAT – Register online at <https://sat.collegeboard.org/home>

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Deadline (WITH FEE)</u>
October 3rd	September 3rd	September 22nd
November 7th	October 9th	October 27th
December 5th	November 5th	November 23rd
January 23rd	December 28th	January 12th
March 5th	February 5th	February 23rd
May 7th	April 8th	April 26th
June 4th	May 5th	May 25th

TEST PREP INFORMATION

Both websites for the ACT and SAT offer free practice tests and test prep materials. Take advantage of these! Students who do preparation before the exam do much better than students who take the exams without having prepared at all. If you are not satisfied with your scores from the spring, you will want to plan to take the test again by the December test date at the very latest. Colleges and Universities pull the best combination of scores for admissions purposes – remember, they are looking for reasons to admit you!



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

**CONCORDANCE BETWEEN ACT COMPOSITE SCORE AND
SUM OF SAT CRITICAL READING AND MATHEMATICS SCORES**

SAT CR+M (Score Range)	ACT Composite Score	SAT CR+M (Single Score)
1600	36	1600
1540-1590	35	1560
1490-1530	34	1510
1440-1480	33	1460
1400-1430	32	1420
1360-1390	31	1380
1330-1350	30	1340
1290-1320	29	1300
1250-1280	28	1260
1210-1240	27	1220
1170-1200	26	1190
1130-1160	25	1150
1090-1120	24	1110
1050-1080	23	1070
1020-1040	22	1030
980-1010	21	990
940-970	20	950
900-930	19	910
860-890	18	870
820-850	17	830
770-810	16	790
720-760	15	740
670-710	14	690
620-660	13	640
560-610	12	590
510-550	11	530



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

COLLEGE ESSAY WRITING TIPS

Most college applications require at least one essay or personal statement. It is important to take these essays seriously, and put in the time and effort needed to make your essay as strong as possible. If an application says an essay is optional, **DO IT**. This is often your opportunity to tell the admissions officer something about yourself that they may not get elsewhere in your application. Below are some tips to help you along the way:

1. Open with an anecdote.

Since the admissions officers only spend a brief amount of time reviewing stories, it's pivotal that you engage them from the very beginning.

"Instead of trying to come up with gimmicky, catchy first lines, start by sharing a moment," says Janine Robinson, writing coach and founder of **Essay Hell**. "These mini stories naturally grab the reader ... it's the best way to really involve them in the story."

Let the moment you choose be revealing of your personality and character. Describe how it shaped who you are today and who you will be tomorrow.

2. Put yourself in the school's position.

At the end of the day, colleges want to accept someone who is going to graduate, be successful in the world and have the university associated with that success. In your essay, it is vital that you present yourself as someone who loves to learn, can think critically and has a passion for things—anything.

"Colleges always say to show your intellectual vitality and curiosity," Robinson says. "They want kids who are going to hit the ground running—zoom to class and straight out into the world. They want them hungry and self-aware."

3. Stop trying so hard.

"One of the biggest mistakes students make is trying too hard to impress," Robinson says. "Trust that it is those every day, specific subjects that are much more interesting to read about."

Colleges are tired of reading about that time you had a come-from-behind- win in the state championship game or the time you built houses in Ecuador, according to Robinson. Get creative!

Furthermore, you're writing doesn't have to sound like Shakespeare. "These essays should read like smart, interesting 17-year-olds wrote them," says Lacy Crawford, former independent college application counselor and author of **Early Decision**. "A sense of perspective and self-awareness is what's interesting."



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

4. Ditch the thesaurus. Swap sophistication for self-awareness

There is a designated portion of the application section designated to show off your repertoire of words. Leave it there.

On the personal essay, write how you would speak. Using “SAT words” in your personal statement sounds unnatural and distances the reader from you.

“I think most students are torn between a pathway dividing a diary entry and a press release. It’s supposed to be marketing document of the self,” Crawford says.

5. Write about what matters to you, not what matters to them

Crawford recommends students begin by answering the question, “if you had 10 minutes to talk to them in person, what would you say?” The admissions teams are looking for authenticity and quality of thinking.

“Theoretically, I think anything could be ‘the perfect topic, as long as you demonstrate how well you think, your logic and ability to hold readers’ attention,” Crawford says.

6. Read the success stories.

“The best advice is to read essays that have worked,” Robinson says. “You’ll be surprised to see that they’re not winning Pulitzers; they are pieces of someone. You want your story to be the one she doesn’t put down.”

Once you find a topic you like, sit down and write for an hour or so. It shouldn’t take longer than that. When you write from your heart, words should come easily.

Rawlins recommends showing the essay to a family member or friend and ask if it sounds like the student. “Take a few days and come back to it. But only do that once,” Rawlins says. “Reading it over and over again will only drive you nuts.”

7. Don’t pretend to be someone you’re not.

While colleges tend to nod to disadvantaged students, roughing up your background won’t help your cause.

“It’s less about the topic and more about how you frame it and what you have to say about it, Robinson says. “The better essay is has the most interesting thing to say, regardless of a topic that involves a crisis or the mundane.”

The essays serve as a glimpse into how your mind works, how you view the world and provides perspective. If you have never had some earth shattering experience that rocked your world, don’t pretend you did. Your insights will be forced and disingenuous.



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

8. Follow the instructions.

While the directions on the applications may sound generic, and even repetitive after applying to a variety of schools, Rawlins points out that every rhyme has a reason.

“They have to know that college put a lot of thought into the instructions we give them—so please follow them!” he says. “We’ve given a lot of thought to the words we use. We want what we ask for.”

9. Use this space to tell them what your application can’t.

Most colleges don’t have the time or bandwidth to research each individual applicant. They only know what you put in front of them. “If they don’t tell us something, we can’t connect the dots,” Rawlins says. “We’re just another person reading their material.”

Like Crawford, he recommends students imagining they are sitting next to him in his office and responding to the question, “What else do I need to know?” And their essays should reflect how they would respond.

At the end of the day, however, Rawlins wants students to know that the personal essay is just another piece of the larger puzzle. “They prescribe way too much importance to the essay,” Rawlins says. “It makes a massive difference—good or bad—to very few out there, so keep it in context.”

**Pulled from USA TODAY online "Voices from Campus" Paige Carlotti, 10/24/2014*



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

ONLINE RESOURCES

Title	Address	Description
Family Connection	http://connection.naviance.com/hudsoncrhs	Valuable College Planning tool! Compiles the admissions statistics for HCRS students. Students will also request transcripts through Family Connection and track applications.
Common Application	www.commonapp.org	Allows a student to complete one application used by over 400 schools.
College Board/SAT	www.collegeboard.org	Students can sign up for SAT and get practice test information. Also has comprehensive information about colleges and careers, a nice supplement to Family Connection.
ACT	www.actstudent.org	Website to sign up for the ACT test. Students can also access test prep information and full-length practice tests.
FAFSA	www.fafsa.ed.gov	Website to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance Online. The new application is posted January 1st – REQUIRED in order to get financial aid from the government.
FAFSA PIN Website	www.pin.ed.gov	Your PIN will be used each year to electronically apply for federal student aid and to access your federal student aid records online.
Fairtest	www.fairtest.org	Lists colleges and universities that do not require the SAT or ACT for admission, or are “test optional” or “text flexible”
Fastweb	www.fastweb.com	Advertises itself as “The Internet’s largest free scholarship search”. Students can fill out information and fast web will send them emails about scholarships that may be a good match.
US Department of Education	www.ed.gov	Offers a great deal of information about how to pay for college and support programs.
National College Athletic Association (NCAA)	www.ncaa.org www.eligibilitycenter.org	Rules for eligibility, recruitment. Division I, II, and III link to the clearinghouse. See the college athletics section of this packet for more information.
Youniversity	www.youniversitytv.com	Watch college video tours of every major college in the US. Social networks can connect you with students, admissions, faculty, and alumni.
VarsityEdge	www.varsityedge.com	Varsityedge provides information for parents, student-athletes, & coaches on the college recruiting process and what it takes to play at the next level.