Tips for Making the College Application Process Easier

Completing applications will take more time than you think. It helps to get organized ahead of time. Make file folders or get a file box for keeping track of all the college applications, test results, lists of your activities, recommendations, etc.

Before you start any application, get an unofficial copy of your transcript. Review it and make sure it is accurate. If not, immediately see your counselor to get the transcript corrected. Students use this unofficial transcript to fill out parts of the application. Most applications ask for a list of courses taken or courses in progress and using the transcript insures accuracy. More tips include:

1. Complete your application online. Most college website application sites are very good. Online applications allow you to work, save what you have done, and work another day. You don't have to worry about messy handwriting and some sites even remind you if you skipped a required section. Colleges encourage the use of online applications. A few colleges even give discounts or waive the fee for students that use the online application.
2. Preview or print a copy of the application several weeks before beginning. Some applications are simply "fill-in-the-blank" and others required essays, recommendations, activity summaries and more.
3. Make sure you have the right application form or in the case of the Common Application, the correct supplement. Some colleges have different forms, for example--one for international students, and you don't want to fill out the wrong one.
4. Always have someone (usually a parent or older sibling), check your application before you click the "submit" button. Although online applications are great, making corrections is not always easy. Print a copy of the application before submitting.
5. In general, the more selective the college, the more complicated the application will be. Read instructions carefully to be certain you are completing and/or providing ALL requested information. Keep copies of everything you complete or send.
6. Observe application deadlines. Deadlines are "all over the place". For example, some scholarship deadlines are earlier than the regular application deadline. Read the website or college applications materials carefully & well ahead of time. Keep a calendar of the dates of each deadline in a prominent place. ALWAYS TRY AND COMPLETE THE APPLICATION TWO WEEKS BEFORE IT IS DUE. THIS PREVENTS CRISIS IF YOUR COMPUTER CRASHES OR POWER IS OUT.
7. Test scores should be sent to the school before the deadline. Students were given the opportunity of sending scores when they registered for the SAT or ACT. If a student signed up for the ACT or SAT online it is easy to double check which schools have been sent scores. But, frequently, between the time of registering for tests and beginning applications the students' school choices have changed. Students are responsible for seeing that the schools they apply to get

their scores. CHECK THIS EARLY as it takes time for SAT or ACT to send the scores if they were not on your initial score report list. The College Board (SAT, SAT Subject, AP) takes about five weeks to send additional score reports after they are requested and they charge for each. Let colleges know if you have taken the tests, but scores are pending.

8. Most private colleges and a few public colleges require a counselor recommendation (often called a secondary school report). The Counseling Office processes many applications and they need your requests turned in no later than **two weeks** before the deadline provided by the college.

9. Order and send official transcripts according to the directions from the counseling office. Official transcripts cost $3.00.Transcripts can be sent to Georgia Universities electronically.

10. Start writing any essay well before the deadline. A quality essay takes writing, editing, re-writing and can't be done in a day. Have a parent, older sibling, or other adult check and re-check the essay.

11. Make copies of all applications, financial aid forms, and correspondence or notices from the school. This prevents last minute panic if you are notified something is missing from your application.

12. Application fees for 4-year colleges vary, but usually are around $50. Schools give you the choice of paying by check or paying online. Some colleges offer fee waivers for those with limited resources. Check with each college for the requirements for fee waivers if you think you may qualify. Frequently if you received an SAT fee waiver, you may qualify for a waiver of the application fee.

13. Check with every college to be sure your application file is complete. They can't make a decision about admitting you if they don't have all the documents. Use the application checklist if they have one. Some colleges have a way to check the status of your application online and some send you an email confirming a complete application. Call the admissions office if you have any concerns about the application being received. Students, completing applications is like taking on a part-time job. They key is getting organized ahead and not waiting until the last minute. Finish the applications and then relax.