

# CALMING COLLEGIATE CONFUSION

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In a new program starting this year called College 101, counselors will be meeting once a month in junior English classes and talking to juniors about preparing for college admissions.

Counselor Jennifer Sherman feels the program will be beneficial for juniors, and that seeing students once a month will give them a better understanding of the college application process than an hour long meeting would.

“We want students to enter senior year having a strong understanding of who they are and what type of college is the next step to reach their career goals,” Sherman said via email. “The more information we can give will help seniors feel ready to start completing and submitting college applications.”

Each month they will be focusing on different topics, starting off in September with types of colleges, what to consider when trying to find a

college that is right for you and college visits. Over the course of the year, students will also be researching colleges and career options, learning the steps to completing and submitting applications, how to get letters of recommendations from teachers and talking about the ACT and SAT along with financial aid and scholarships.

Sherman said that the counselors will also be following up with parents after the monthly meetings to make sure that any concerns or questions parents have are addressed.

College 101 will also teach students more about the schools they want to go to. According to junior Kavin Satyadev, the first time his class met with counselors for the program, they talked about the different sizes of colleges and how that can affect the culture of the school. He learned that every

person has their own opinion on what size school is best for their individual learning experience. For Satyadev, he would like to go to a medium-sized school.

Satyadev is looking forward to the rest of the program and likes the information and advice the counselors are giving them.

“I think it’s helpful because I don’t know much about what to do for college. It tells you all in one place all the steps you need to take to apply properly,” Satyadev said. “This class will help me apply better to college and give me a better chance.”

Students will also be learning how to prepare for college interviews, along with learning what types of questions are necessary to ask on a college visit in order to get the best understanding of the school and its atmosphere.

English teacher Diane

Montgomery was a part of the Professional Learning Community that helped develop the program. Besides helping with the creation of College 101, Montgomery said that she has no part in it and that it is all run by the counselors.

Montgomery is looking forward to the future of the program, and potentially expanding it.

“A lot of juniors don’t know what questions to start asking, where they start looking or what they need to do in order to apply for colleges,” Montgomery said. “I think it’s a great program, and I think that students are going to benefit greatly from it. Eventually we’re going to expand it so there will be activities all the way down for ninth grade.”

## learning the lingo

### EARLY DECISION

A binding application plan. If admitted, the student must withdraw all other applications and commit to the college.

### EARLY ACTION

A non-binding application plan. This application format has a strict application deadline as well as definite release date. If admitted, students usually have until May 1 to enroll.

### TEST OPTIONAL

Schools that self-brand as “test optional” do not require SAT or ACT scores as part of their applications. It is up to the student to decide whether to submit test scores or not.

### SAT SUBJECT TESTS

Subject tests assess applicants’ mastery of different subjects. Students should check college websites for specific requirements regarding subject tests.

### SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS

While applicants are required to submit a personal statement on the Common or Coalition Applications, colleges may also require students answer institution-specific “supplement” questions as part of the application.

LINDSEY RAMSDELL

# THE GREAT DEBATE

Seniors weigh Common, Coalition Applications as they apply to college

When applying for college, seniors are presented with two options: the Common Application and the Coalition Application. For senior Elijah Manson, the Common Application is more practical.

“It was the first one that I was introduced to,” Manson said. “Most colleges I’m applying to most of them use the Common App.”

To apply using the Common App, students go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org), and make an account. From

there, they fill out their basic information and then additional supplements that each school may require them to fill out.

According to senior Sebastian Cubillejo, each college is different, but supplements can be based on the field students plan on studying. After they answer the specialized questions, students submit their resumes. Cubillejo has also been using the Common App, and said that he is not familiar with the

Coalition App at all.

According to counselor Milissa Pierce, the Coalition Application has been under development for two to three years. Still relatively new to teachers and students alike, the Coalition App is only accepted at 113 universities across the country.

Manson said not a lot of high schoolers know about the Coalition App, and so many have not applied using it. Pierce agrees, saying that she has not had enough experience

with the Coalition App to be able to have a preference between it and the Common App.

“Maybe we’ll become more familiar with it,” Pierce said. “But we’re just familiar with it, kind of in name only.”

Still, many believe that the Coalition App offers a perspective that the Common App doesn’t. The Coalition App is a virtual locker of achievements, activities and writing samples over all four

years of high school. Pierce said the goal of the Coalition App is for universities to get a more well-rounded look at students.

“They both have work to do, you know, and it’s just different kind of work.” She said “What you might have with the Coalition App is a bigger picture of you.”

## Important college dates:

### FIRST SEMESTER OF JUNIOR YEAR

Juniors and their parents have junior planning meetings with counselors to discuss graduation requirements and college.

### END OF JUNIOR YEAR

Students ask teachers for letters of recommendation. Requirements vary by institution.

### FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

Seniors work on applications for early action and decision deadlines.

### NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER

High deadline months for early admission applications.

### APRIL 1

The regular decision release date for most colleges without rolling admissions.

### EARLY JUNE

College t-shirt day at school.

APRIL The SAT with writing is administered to all juniors free of charge.

AUG. 1 The Common Application and Coalition Application open to students.

OCT. 1 The Free Application for Student Federal Aid opens. Some schools may also require the CSS profile for financial aid.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY High deadline months for regular decision applications.

MAY 1 National College Decision Day

### MY VIEW

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## At the finish line

Life is a marathon, not a sprint. With application deadlines looming over the Class of 2018, the month of October can either feel like the last painstaking mile of a gruelling marathon, or a high-stakes sprint.

While some have already been accepted or committed to their future colleges, others are just

now creating Common Application accounts. The variety of preparedness levels is astonishing—ask any two seniors, and they are likely to be at completely different points in their application process.

Most seniors, however, are now in full application mode. They spend their evenings trying to fit in time to review endless essays between homework and practices, putting off personal obligations to make up for lost time and wondering whether or not taking one last ACT might boost their standings. All this pressure can take a lot out of someone.

During a time when the average student stands shoulder-to-shoulder with thousands of other identical applicants, tension can run high. Trying to always present your best self gets tiring, and at the end of the day, you shouldn’t be pretending to be someone

you’re not. At this point, you can’t be any more “you” than you already are, and that’s not defined by what you fill in on an online bubble sheet.

There are students who make it to the Ivy League and struggle to find jobs after graduation. There are also students who drop out of college and become billionaires. The future is not set in stone. There is absolutely no concrete path to success—for anybody.

Allowing your self-worth to be determined by the number of honors or AP classes you’ve taken, your grade point average or number of colleges you get into can be incredibly damaging.

Doing your best is what is important, not scrutinizing every aspect of your life that gets put down on a transcript.

All that’s left now is to be honest. Put your best foot forward and leave the judging to the admissions officers.

We’ve made it this far. We just have

to collect the last three years, tie them up in a neat little bow and send them off to our hopeful future schools.

During this time of high self-criticism and low self-esteem, it can be hard to focus on the good. As a whole, our generation has cracked up to be pretty great. We are arguably the most connected and educated generation there has ever been.

A new study in Child Development Journal shows that today’s teens are taking longer to start engaging in “adult activities,” such as driving, dating, drinking and drugs. The cause of this phenomenon is highly disputed—whether it’s due to increased caution or laziness—but the biggest commonality that’s mentioned is the shift in culture. Across most households in America, families are smaller and more focused on the children.

While it’s not exactly scientific

to say that the drop in these (mostly illegal) activities is due to a higher amount of responsibility in Generation Z (people born after 1996), it’s hard to argue against lower rates of teen pregnancy and underage drinking.

It’s safe to say that as a generation, we are lining up to be pretty great. Growing up and surviving teenagedom is somewhat a feat in itself. We’ve handled ourselves well, but now it is time to prepare for what’s next. Our next big step is getting to college.

It’s hard to give yourself credit when you’re simultaneously kicking yourself for waiting until the very last minute to fill out applications. But what’s important is what lies beyond your application. The makeup of your character is what will get you further in life than the makeup of your college application.

We are going to be fine.