

Preparing for the Future

An Informational Packet for Students and Their Parents

Preparing for the future of your child is an involved and serious endeavor. The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of available information that will assist junior and senior students and their families to prepare for their post-high-school plans. Additional information will be communicated as available through standard St. Ambrose updates.

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St. Ambrose Academy Webpage:

<http://www.ambroseacademy.org>

I. THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

Simple Application: If you are applying via paper-and-pencil to a UW-System campus (including UW-Madison), a technical school such as MATC, or an out-of-state public or private institution that has a one-step, simple application, please complete the following steps:

1. **It is to your advantage to submit your completed application as early as possible.**
2. Attach the application fee to form
3. Include/attach any additional information (resume of activities, letter of special circumstances,
4. Recommendation letters, etc. requested by the institution.
5. **Give the completed application directly to Mrs. Galvin or Mr. Schmiesing.**

Online/Electronic Application**

1. Fill out application as instructed on the website and submit it.
2. Print out “School Counselor Form” page (last page).
3. Attach the application fee (check) to the form-(if not paid by credit card).
4. Attach any additional information requested by the institution.
5. **Give directly to Mrs. Galvin or Mr. Schmiesing (along with any recommendation letters).**

II. COLLEGE APPLICATIONS UPDATES

UW System, Including Madison: UW campuses prefer electronic applications.**

Paper applications for all UW System campuses are available in the Student Services Office. The application should be completed and submitted to your counselor along with an admission fee check made out to the specific UW campus. I will attach a high school transcript and send the application to the designated school.

To Apply On-line to a UW System campus: apply.wisconsin.edu

- **UW Campus Information and Visitor Center:** 263-2400
- **UW System HELP Line:** 263-4567 (info on the 26 campuses)

Website for the online Student Information System: <http://uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/>

From Help On-Line you can visit a UW campus, talk to an advisor, calculate college costs, and much more. Get answers to questions about admission, paying for college, living on campus, choosing a major, new student programs, and credit transfer, etc. **Student Help-Line: 263-4567**

UW Madison Admissions Update: UW-Madison has advised us of specific items in the application process, which require your careful attention. Highlights include:

1. You must include a thoughtful, well-written Personal Statement with your application. Admissions staff says they are looking for 1-2 typed pages. Suggestions for writing the Personal Statement include being especially careful with your grammar and spelling.
2. Request a letter of recommendation from an English or social studies teacher and one from a math or science teacher.
3. Write about your extracurricular activities. Notice that admissions staff is looking for a degree of involvement and commitment in a few activities, rather than merely a list of activities. Include a paragraph about which activity is/was most meaningful to you and why.
4. UW-Madison is serious about schedule changes and about your senior-year grades. They state, "Admission is based on our evaluation of a number of factors, including senior year courses. If admitted students change any of their current courses without our approval, their admission may be canceled. We strongly advise students not to change their course list. However, if extenuating circumstances prevent a student from pursuing the current course list, the student will need to write a letter of appeal explaining and justifying the course change(s). Your counselor must approve any course change, or the student's admission may be canceled. It is important for them to do the best work they can during their senior year. Their admission will be made final only if their senior courses are completed with grades of the quality they presented in admission consideration."

Wisconsin Private Colleges: The application process is the same overall. For questions on any of the campuses visit <http://www.waicu.org/students/>.

Madison Area Technical College (MATC): In addition, MATC offers an excellent variety of one-year diploma and two-year college transfer program that is accepted by the UW System. Brochures and catalogs describing all programs are available in the Student Services Office.

To Apply On-line to a Technical College: www.witechcolleges.com

- **WI Association of Independent Colleges & Universities:** 256-7761
- **MATC:** 246-6100

Applications for admission to MATC will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis. Applications will be available in the Student Services Office in early October and must be completed and returned to your counselor along with a check for the current admission fee made out to MATC. Several programs at MATC fill up on the first day applications are accepted (November 19); therefore, early application is advised. Applications received by MATC after the third Monday in November will be considered on a program availability basis. Additionally, specific programs are already accepting and close November 19 (see MATC website for exact information – <http://matcmadison.edu/matc/>)

The ACT is required in the following fields at MATC: Animal technician, Associated Degree in Nursing Technical, Dental Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Technician, Occupational Therapy Technician, Optometric Technician, Respiratory Therapy, Radiography. Students applying for these programs should take the ACT on the first date offered.

III. ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Admissions officials look at...

- High school rank in class and GPA and the strength of a student's course over the four high school years.
- ACT and/or SAT I scores, plus SAT II scores, if required.
- School and community activities.
- Teacher recommendations, if required.
- Student essays, if required.
- Overall quality of student effort in preparing the application – following directions, proper spelling, typing or neat handwriting, etc. (Another good reason to apply online!)

Students are encouraged to carefully consider the quantity as well as quality of courses elected as seniors. Most universities and colleges are routinely increasing entrance requirements. The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, makes the following statement regarding ways to meet competitive admissions standards, "Our admissions decisions are heavily influenced by the degree of difficulty of the student's curriculum, INCLUDING COURSES TAKEN IN THE SENIOR YEAR. WE ARE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WHEN STUDENTS ACCEPT RATHER THAN AVOID SERIOUS ACADEMIC CHALLENGES..."

Summary Tips from the Pros:

- Grades matter, but so does the rigor of your courses. It's best to take four years of English, science, social studies, math, and world language, plus a variety of electives. Try to finish high school stronger than when you started.
- A long list of extracurricular can mark you as a "serial joiner." It's better to participate in a few school/community activities over a length of time. Document the amount of time spent on your activities.
- You should be completely responsible for completing your applications – that includes writing required essays.
- Your parents shouldn't be helping you write your essays. Your parent(s)' role is to read an early draft and judge whether it captures you accurately or not.
- **NOTE:** Admissions offices spend less than 15 minutes on each application. Spelling, grammar, and neatness count. Typed applications are appreciated.
- If you are wait-listed, persistence can make the difference. Write back and tell them you're still very interested. Provide any new information they need to know.
- Remember, you're trying to get into the best college for you, not just the mythical "best college."

IV. COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTING

Testing: There are no uniform guidelines for students regarding college-entrance and college-placement testing. Some prefer one, some accept either, and some may have their own tests. However most colleges, technical schools, and specialty schools require admissions exams (and prefer the ACT). The ACT, SAT I, and in some cases the SAT II Subject Tests are the most popular college entrance exams.

ACT/SAT Prep Books

We have a number of test prep books available for students to take. Many of these books provide test-taking strategies, along with valuable practice tests. Check out sample questions for the ACT- www.actstudent.org or visit www.collegeboard.com for SAT information.

American College Test (ACT)

The ACT is given at West HS, East HS, Memorial HS, LaFollete HS and Edgewood HS. **ACT web site at www.act.org Please access the website for test dates and deadlines.**

Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)

- SAT – SAT I
- SAT II: Subject Test –The SAT is given at West HS.

SAT web site at www.collegeboard.com. **Please access the website for test dates and deadlines.**

SAT-ACT CONVERSION CHART

Here is how scores on one correlate to the other. If you get a 23 on the ACT, for example, that's roughly the same as getting a 1060 on the SAT.

Composite (ACT)	Verbal & Math (SAT)	Composite (ACT)	Verbal & Math (SAT)
36	1600	23	1060-1080
35	1560-1590	22	1020-1050
34	1510-1550	21	980-1010
33	1460-1500	20	940-970
32	1410-1450	19	900-930
31	1360-1400	18	860-890
30	1320-1350	17	810-850
29	1280-1310	16	760-800
28	1240-1270	15	710-750
27	1210-1230	14	660-700
26	1170-1200	13	590-650
25	1130-1160	12	520-580
24	1090-1120	11	500-510

ST. AMBROSE ACADEMY ACT-SAT CODE NUMBER: 501-147

Reporting Test Scores To College: It is **your** responsibility to see that the appropriate ACT and/or SAT I and/or SAT II scores are sent to colleges. If you do not code your choice of college(s) at the time you registered for the tests, you can go online to have your scores sent. Colleges require **OFFICIAL TEST SCORES** from the testing corporation.

V. FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

Beware of scholarship scams. Don't pay for scholarship service to look for scholarships for you. They give you information you can find yourself without a fee. **FINANCIAL AID** originates from these sources: 1) your parents; 2) federal government; 3) state programs; 4) college programs; 5) private organizations. Most all financial aid is based on family financial need. There are six major federal financial aid programs: Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), Work-Study (FWS), Perkins Loans, Stafford Loans, and Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). **Grants** are monetary awards that do not need to be repaid; **work-study** gives the student the chance to work on campus and earn money, and **loans** (these are low interest loans) must be paid back (you do not have to pay back until after graduation). If you receive financial aid, your financial aid "package" may be a combination of the above. There are periodic changes in financial aid programs and policies.

The Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed by students wishing to apply for federal student financial aid. "Federal student financial aid" means federal grant, loan and work-study money for your education. The federal student assistance program can help you pay for most kinds of education after high school. The aid is available if you are attending a college, a professional school, or a vocational or technical school. After you submit a FAFSA, the processing agency will analyze the information supplied by the applicant, then forward that analysis to each college coded on the FAFSA. All information is confidential. The college(s) and/or program(s) then decide whether the applicant will receive aid, and the amount.

FAFSA Timeline:

- January-March – file for FAFSA (preferably January!)
- 4-6 weeks later receive an EFC (Expected Family Contribution*) letter as part of the Student Aid Report (SAR)
- April-June – award letter from colleges

* Your college uses the EFC to determine the amount of federal grant, loan, or work-study award, if you are eligible.

Helpful Financial Aid Internet Links:

1. [FAFSA Form Help](#): on-line help with this all-important form.
2. [Financial Need Estimator](#) estimate your likelihood of receiving financial aid.
3. [Edvest](#) Wisconsin's own state sponsored college savings plan.
4. [Us Department of Education](#) great "how to" site by the U.S. government.
5. [Salliemae](#): college planning and financial aid site.
6. [Educational Loan Information](#) Salliemae site.
7. [Fastweb Financial Aid Search](#): a free service searches for scholarships for you.
8. [Finaid](#): calculators and resources to help demystify the financial aid process.
9. [xap.com](#): comprehensive site, including an "expected family contribution" estimator.
10. [Sport Scholarship Depot](#): advice and contacts for pursuing athletic scholarships.
12. [Selective Service](#): 18? you must register for the draft to receive federal financial aid.
13. [College Savings Plan Network](#): how to start a 529 plan for college savings.
14. [college money.com](#): help with planning how to finance college.
15. [Scholarships.com](#): a new comprehensive site: free searches and more.

16. [Scholarship Resource Network Express](#): a free scholarship search service.
17. [gocollege.com](#): comprehensive site.
18. [scholarshiphelp.org](#): very helpful! Designed with parents in mind.
19. [Peterson's College Countdown](#): a new site: very helpful!
20. [scholarships.com](#): a new (free) search engine for college scholarships.
21. [www.collegeanswer.com](#) rated "best of the best" by Forbes magazine
22. [www.parentanswerservice.com](#) a new site by the Salliemae people.

VI. ADDITIONAL POST-HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS

Information for Student Seeking Employment

Job Service is a state public employment office, which facilitates the matching process between applicant and employers. Students who wish to obtain full-time work or summer employment may contact Job Service at 1819 Aberg Avenue, Madison. The office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday. The telephone number is 608-245-5390. This office offers employment counseling and there is no fee for their assistance.

Information about Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and classroom-related instruction through which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. There are hundreds of apprenticeship programs available in construction, service and industrial occupations. Programs range from 2 to 5 years in length. By combining on-the-job training with classroom instruction, the apprentice learns through hands on experience and related classroom instruction. Plus, the apprentice will be getting technical back up necessary for a complete understanding of a chosen field. The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) provides the related instruction component to supplement the apprentice's on-the-job training. By statute, registered apprentices get paid their hourly wage to attend 144 hours of trade-specific schooling per year. Additional course work may be required. To find out more about the apprenticeship program visit the website at [www.witechcolleges.com](#), or telephone 608-246-5202.

Information about Taking Time Off

Some students may elect to take a "time off" and postpone entrance to college for a year. This time off could be structured or unstructured, and directed toward career, academic, or purely personal pursuits. Most fundamentally, it is a time to step back and reflect, to gain perspective on personal values and goals, or to gain needed life experience in a setting separate from and independent of one's accustomed pressures and expectations. Tip: Experts recommend that students considering taking time off always have a backup plan. This includes completing one or two college, specialty, or technical school applications.

Information about the Military

The military trains men and women to protect the interests of our country. The United States military offers qualified high school graduates a salary and free job training. The military also provides discipline and structure, as well as opportunities for career advancement and travel. The military is the nation's single largest employer and it offers training in over 2,000 job specialties, 75% of which have civilian counterparts. The four major branches of the military are the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marines. Military opportunities also exist in the Coast Guard, the National Guard, and the Reserve. Students who want to go to college before they enter the military should consider attending a college that has an ROTC program.

VII. Educational Events

1. **Greater Milwaukee College Workshop** in Downtown Milwaukee
Sunday, March 6, 2011, from 12:00 pm-5:00 pm
Hilton Milwaukee
509 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53203
Link: www.gmcollegeworkshop.com
2. **The Wisconsin Education Fair** at Verona High School
October 2011, from 6:30-8:30p.m. All Juniors and Seniors are encouraged to attend. You will have the opportunity to meet with various college/university/tech school/and military representatives from the Midwest. This is especially important for students who are unsure of their options after high school.