



COLLEGE COACHING SERVICES

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NAVIGATING YOUR WAY THROUGH COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

by **Laurie Cortez, M.A.** (Originally published in the *Daily Sound*)

Senior Year.....Along with the jubilation of the Homecoming, Senior Prom and Graduation Caps flying through the air, comes the complexity of navigating through the college application process. You will hear about an alphabet soup of acronyms such as SAT I, SAT Subject Tests, ACT, AP Exams, Common Applications, Early Action, Early Decision, etc. While this myriad of forms and applications may seem daunting, there are common steps I recommend to reduce stress and ensure that students are accepted into colleges that best meet their needs.

The first step involves identifying the universities you are interested in. I instruct my students to choose:

- 2-3 safety schools (colleges in which your qualifications exceed those required for admission)
- 2-3 probable schools (colleges in which your qualifications closely match those recommended for admission)
- 2-3 stretch schools (highly selective universities in which your qualifications are below those recommended for admission, but you may have a chance of admission because of unique activities or circumstances.)

Once you develop a final list of universities, create a time line for completing an application for each college. Identify which universities offer Early Action or Early Decision Admissions, which universities you will apply to through Regular Admission, and obtain those deadlines. This important step will ensure you set up an appropriate schedule to complete and submit quality applications.

Moreover, verify which standardized tests are required for each university. Colleges differ in their testing requirements, check with each school directly to make sure you have completed specific testing requirements. If you still need to take the SAT, SATII or ACT you must register on Collegeboard.com as soon as possible.

Determine if any of the colleges on your list utilize the Common Application. This is a uniform application used by over 300 universities, designed to streamline the application process. You may be able to complete one application and use it for a number of university and colleges throughout the country. Please keep in mind that many schools will also ask for supplemental material, unique to their university, this information is also listed on the website.

Above all, stick to your timeline. Staying on schedule will keep you in control of the college application process, thus alleviating much of the stress inherent in this project.

Once you have submitted your applications, enjoy the rest of your senior year as you await your letters of acceptance and ponder your new adventures. Good luck!