Recommended Resources

- Counseling Canvas Page
  - o Senior Packet
  - o Senior Timeline
  - o College Application Workshops
  - o Counselor Recommendation Packet
- Naviance
  - o College Super Match: List of colleges that match your search criteria
  - o Colleges I'm Thinking About
  - o Scattergram
  - o College profiles and statistics
  - o Make sure to add your email address in Naviance

Common Application

- Go to www.commonapp.org and create an account; don't forget your login information
- 5 tabs:
  - o Dashboard
    - ▪ Shows the status of the application components for all colleges on one page
  - o My Colleges
    - ▪ Shows detailed contact info, deadlines, and requirements for each college
    - ▪ Where you submit additional application items for each college
  - o Common Application
    - ▪ Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities, and Writing sections
    - ▪ Information in this section is sent to all colleges
    - ▪ List all courses and grades (not all colleges require this)
  - o College Search
    - ▪ Allows you to search colleges to add to your "My Colleges" tab
  - o Financial Aid Resources
    - ▪ Learn about financial aid opportunities for each of your colleges
- Info needed to fill out Education section of "Common Application" tab:
  - o Class rank reporting: Choose None (UHS does not rank)
  - o Graduating class size: 550
  - o Cumulative GPA: Use your 9-12 academic weighted GPA
  - o GPA scale: 4
  - o GPA weighting: Choose Weighted
  - o UHS school code: 051984
- FERPA (Under "My Colleges" tab)
  - o Asks you whether or not you waive the right to view the documents that are sent on your behalf (i.e., recommendations, school report, transcript)
  - o We recommend you select the checkbox waiving your right to view these documents as many teachers will not write you a letter unless you do

    o Once you submit this FERPA waiver, you cannot change it

Reporting Official Test Scores (if you plan on sending them)
- SAT and SAT Subject Tests: Request through Collegeboard.org
- ACT: Request through ACT.org
- AP Exams: Request through Collegeboard.org (only send to the college you are attending)

Transcripts
UC and CSU do not require transcripts until you have been accepted and plan to attend (final transcript only). For schools with a portal for counselors to upload information (i.e. CommonApp, Coalition, SendEDU, MIT, Georgetown, etc.) counselors will send your official transcript (make sure that you are inviting your counselor to upload your transcript in this scenario). If schools do not provide an option for counselors to submit transcripts for you, you will be responsible for sending your own transcript. Please either see Mrs. Yang to obtain an official copy to be mailed or visit Parchment here to send electronically and track your transcript.

Counselor Recommendation
- Complete Counselor Recommendation Packet
- Must email completed packet to your counselor from the 19-20 school year by deadlines listed below:
  - **Early Decision or Early Action: October 1^{2nd}, 2020**
  - **Regular Decision-Letter: November 13th, 2020**

Making a College List
To determine whether a school is a **reach, target or safety** for you, please use the college's average GPA, test scores (ACT or SAT), and admit rate as a point of comparison. The Scattergram tool in Naviance is also a good tool to help you determine this information.

1. "**Reach**" – Based on the college's average GPA, average SAT/ACT scores and admit rate, this school would be a stretch for you to be admitted but you would like to apply because it is a dream school. It offers the area of interest you want to pursue.
2. "**Target**" – Based on the college's average GPA, average SAT/ACT scores and admit rate, you have a 50/50 chance of being accepted and this school offers the area of interest you want to pursue.
3. "**Safety**" – Based on the college's average GPA, average SAT/ACT scores and admit rate, you will be admitted to this school. This school also offers the area of interest you would like to pursue, and it is a school you would attend just in case you are not admitted to your target and reach schools.

Your list of colleges should consist of primarily target schools with one or two reach and safety schools. Please make sure that all of the colleges in your list are ones that you would be happy to attend; applying to colleges can be very expensive, and we do not recommend that you apply to any schools to which you would not ultimately attend.

After Submitting Common Application
- Consistently check your email for any communication from colleges
- Check your application status for each college on college portals
- Submit FAFSA and CSS Profile (if needed) by deadlines
- Work with Mrs. Gatlin to apply for scholarships (if needed)
- Decisions will come out by April 1 at the latest; commit by May 1

2020-2021 Common Application Essay Prompts
650-word limit

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your *thinking*? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

TIPS FOR YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

1. **ANSWER THE QUESTION** – Make sure you address all parts of the prompt.
2. **PUT THE FOCUS ON YOURSELF** – Admissions officers want to hear *your* voice, see *your* writing ability and learn about YOU. They want to know your thoughts, feelings and what you took away from your experience. Avoid "thesaurizing" your essay. Think of it as a journal entry with good grammar and spelling.
3. **SPELLING AND GRAMMAR DO COUNT** – Make sure you type you essays in Microsoft Word where you can spell-check it first. Have someone else read and revise it and then copy and paste the final draft into the application. Do not write your essay in the application – there is no spell-check.
4. **BE ORIGINAL** – Try to avoid clichés and quotes. Divorces, grandparents' deaths, winning the big game, or break-ups tend to be common topics. Try to write about something unique to only you.
5. **CONSIDER A SMALLER CANVAS** – It doesn't take a big event to write a compelling essay. One student wrote about how he got to know his patrons serving them breakfast at his weekend job, while another student wrote about why an Iron Maiden poster graces her bedroom wall.
6. **APPEAL TO THE 5 SENSES** – Use imagery and clear vivid prose to paint a picture or set the stage.
7. **PROVE IT** – If you want to convey that you are a leader, or determined, or motivated – PROVE IT! Give specific, detailed examples of actions – demonstrate how you showed leadership or what you did to persevere. Then make sure to express what you took away from the experience
8. **HOOK YOUR READER** – Admissions officers read thousands of essays, so grab their interest right away with an intriguing introduction. Raise questions, appeal to their emotions, make them want to keep reading. Here are some examples of interesting first lines