

TILTON COLLEGE COUNSELING SUMMER GUIDEBOOK!

SUMMER 2023

Dear Class of 2024 & Families,

Congratulations, on finishing your junior year. While we want you to take a break after last year, conquering your college process will be a breeze. Especially, if you follow the guidance that your friendly college counseling office will provide you throughout the summer and next fall.

If you have not done so already, make sure you become a member of our Google Classroom: College Counseling Seminar. Every topic that we covered this year in College Seminar is organized in a module format and provides you with all the essential information. (Students, please take the time to share and review information on Google Classroom *with your families*; don't have them logon for you.)

Tilton School's College Counseling Summer Guidebook contains important information on:

1. *Checklist*. What you need to be prepared for this upcoming school year.
2. *GPA & Testing*. Provides context to your academic profile.
3. *Acceptance Likelihood*. Reach, Level, & Likely School based on your academic profile.
4. *College Essay*. Topics for the 2023–2024 School Year.
5. *College Visit*. How to make the most of your campus visit.
6. *Interview*. Tips, Tricks, & Strategies.

Please regularly check and update your SCOIR account. All summer communication will be sent via SCOIR and it is also a great place to take notes. Remember, both students and family have their own account login.

This is going to be an exciting and busy school year. So, let's get to work!

Warm Regards,

Tilton College Counseling

TWELFTH GRADE & POST GRADUATE CHECKLIST

SUMMER	
	Get organized. Use SCOIR and update your college list and note application deadlines. Determine a system that will help you keep all your notes and application requirements straight.
	Continue Researching Colleges. Plan in-person campus tours. Do virtual tours and join online information sessions.
	Draft Applications: Common App, Coalition, & School Specific Applications.
	Letters of Recommendation. You should have already asked a junior teacher for a recommendation and added them to your SCOIR account.
	Draft College Essay - Multiple drafts
	Test Prep. The summer is a great time to complete test prep for the ACT and/or SAT in the Fall. Officially register for tests on Tilton campus. (Speak to your counselor about your individual plan.)

FALL	
	Stay Organized. ALL students are expected to be checking their email regularly and keeping their SCOIR account updated with progress. Not all colleges have the same deadlines or admission requirements. Make sure you know college expectations.
	Shape Your College List. A balanced college list needs to include an appropriate mix of reach, target/possible, and likely schools
	Applications Plan. Work with your college counselor to determine the best application strategy for you. Early Decision (binding), Early Action (non-binding), and Regular Decision. ED & EA deadlines are typically around November 1. Regular decision tends to be on January 1.
	Letters of Recommendation. Ask a second core course teacher for a recommendation.
	College Essay. Finalize and edit. This should be the best piece of work you submit
	Draft, Edit, & Finalize Supplements.
	Interview. Determine if the college you are applying to requires interviews or if it will help with demonstrated interest and schedule a time to meet. Attend on campus Rep visits.
	Testing. If applicable, take the SAT and / or ACT
	Financial Aid. The FAFSA opens on October 1. Complete the necessary documents required by colleges. Some colleges also require the CSS Profile or a school-specific form.

WINTER	
	Apply for colleges Regular Decision. Popular deadlines are January 1, January 15, and March 1. Also, keep in mind rolling decisions.
	Financial Aid. You can complete the FAFSA anytime after December 1. If you are applying for financial aid and have not yet completed this step, now is a good time to start.
	Hear back from ED/EA applications. This is the time early decision/action applicants will likely hear back from schools on the admission status and financial aid award.

SPRING	
	Hear back and decide on a college. Track down all decisions and make a decision on where to attend. Make sure to update your SCOIR account.
	Evaluate financial aid offer. Compare offers, and possibly appeal to request additional financial aid. Develop a plan to account for any financial gaps.
	Pay tuition deposit to save your place in your college's freshman class. Sending in your deposit late could cause a serious problem. You may only submit a deposit to one institution on May 1.
	Set up your academic portal and email at your new college. Many of you have already done this during the admission process. Almost all the paperwork you will need to complete will be done online, and notifications about the next steps will be sent to your new college email.

SUMMER BEFORE COLLEGE	
	Housing selection. If you're going to live in a dorm, your college will send you housing information as well as a contract that you must return.
	Select a meal plan. Enrolling in one may be mandatory for on-campus students.
	Get a physical before college starts. Most incoming college students have to submit the results of a recent physical exam and their vaccination history before they can register for classes. Keep in mind that colleges might have new COVID vaccination policies.
	Attend pre-orientation programs, if they're offered. These programs let first-year students meet one another and can be a great way to ease into campus life.
	Find out if you have to take placement exams to determine your level in reading, writing, math, or other subjects. Your standardized test scores may enable you to skip some placement exams but look into testing requirements and exam schedule.
	Course Registration. Find out how to register for classes and college academic advising procedures.
	Thank your supporters. Your family, teachers, coaches, counselors, and consultants who helped you with your college process.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Tilton College Counseling will recalculate students GPA based on courses of consequence: English, math, history, science, and foreign language. The GPA in SCOIR is unweighted and does not include bonus points for AP or Honors level work, this is the typical practice of college admission offices. But, keep in mind there is always an exception to the rule. A students in-house cumulative GPA is used to determine likelihood of admission.

Tilton's College Counseling Office uses the following terminology to describe a student's chances of admission: Likely, Level, and Reach. The data is entered into students' SCOIR account which enables the scattergram function, providing students with a visual of their chances.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

ACT / SAT Required? Flexible? Optional?

Many, many colleges and universities have become test optional. This includes the University of California System, and the Ivy and NESCAC leagues. For an up-to-date list of test optional institutions, check out the Fair Test website at www.fairtest.org.

"Does test optional really mean test optional?" Yes. Over 500 colleges and universities have affirmed that test optional means test-optional and students will not be at a disadvantage if they apply without a test score. To learn more, review the National Association for College Admission Counseling [newsroom post](#).

Test Preparation

Tilton College Counseling works with Revolution Prep to provide test prep options to Tilton students looking for live instruction. Revolution Prep offers one-on-one tutoring and small-group courses, all of which are offered live online using a video platform. Financial aid is available for the small group courses; please contact your college counselor if you have questions about financial aid. Or, feel free to contact our dedicated Revolution Prep Advisor Vasilios Kostakis at 781.916.8668 or Vasilios.Kostakis@revolutionprep.com.

ACT	IF YOUR SAT SCORE IS:		
36	<1530	1530–1600	>1580
35	<1490	1490–1580	>1560
34	<1450	1450–1560	>1520
33	<1420	1420–1520	>1480
32	<1390	1390–1480	>1440
31	<1360	1360–1440	>1410
30	<1330	1330–1410	>1380
29	<1300	1300–1380	>1350
28	<1260	1260–1350	>1320
27	<1230	1230–1320	>1290
26	<1200	1200–1290	>1250
25	<1160	1160–1250	>1220
24	<1130	1130–1220	>1190
23	<1100	1100–1190	>1150
22	<1060	1060–1150	>1120
21	<1030	1030–1120	>1090
20	<990	990–1090	>1050
19	<960	960–1050	>1020
18	<920	920–1020	>980
17	<880	880–980	>950
16	<830	830–950	>910
15	<780	780–910	>870
14	<730	730–870	>820
13	<690	690–820	>770
12	<650	650–770	>720
11	<620	620–720	>680
10	<590	590–680	>640
9	<520	520–640	>640

TESTING CALENDAR

Tilton will host the ACT* and SAT* on-campus. Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation should they take either test at a different test center.

SAT	
Test Date	Registration Deadline
Saturday, August 26, 2023	July 28
Saturday, October 7, 2023*	September 8
Saturday, November 4, 2023	October 5
Saturday, December 2, 2023	November 3
Saturday, March 9, 2024	February 8
Saturday, May 4, 2024*	April 5
Saturday, June 1, 2024	May 2

ACT	
Test Date	Registration Deadline
Saturday, September 9, 2023	August 4
Saturday, October 28, 2023*	September 22
Saturday, December 9, 2023	November 3
Saturday, February 10, 2024	January 5
Saturday, April 13, 2024*	March 8
Saturday, June 8, 2024	May 3
Saturday, July 13, 2024	June 7

ACCEPTANCE LIKELIHOOD

Definitions:

With a very strong academic profile...

Reach: less than 30% >> 25%

Level: between 30–65%

Likely: greater than 65% >> 45%

With an upward trending or “bumpy” academic profile...

Reach: less than 30% >> 40%

Level: between 30–65% >> 40–75%

Likely: greater than 70% >> 75%

A Balanced College List



COLLEGE ESSAY

COMMON APPLICATION PROMPTS

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. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
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?

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.

HOW TO START: BRAINSTORMING TOPICS

Important life questions to ask:

- Where did you start out?
- Where have you been?
- Where are you now?

Important events in your life:

- Events that teach you something about life e.g. being selected for a team might have taught you the value of hard work and perseverance
- Events that made you feel suddenly more mature/ older/ grown up e.g. looking after your little brother or sister for the first time
- Events that gave you inspiration for your future e.g. the first time you were given Legos and built a 1000 piece skyscraper hinted at your future love of architecture.
- Events that highlight how important it is to enjoy life e.g. loss of a family member or pet

Sample list to motivate your writing:

- Day you were born; Your earliest childhood memory (describe in detail); Your most vivid childhood experiences
- Your school years
- A special trip you have taken
- A favorite meaningful thing/object you received from someone special
- The first time you gave a speech; The first time you wrote an essay

- A very funny event
- A time when you cried/ A death in the family
- Your first bike ride
- A memorable/favorite book
- A hospital stay
- Your first plane flight
- A day you met someone famous
- Your First love

Reflect on life events:

- What values do you notice reflected in the important life events?
- What would you change about your life events if you could? Why?
- What life event changed your future?

COLLEGE VISIT QUESTIONS

ACADEMICS

- Are some majors or departments considered stronger or more popular than others?
- Are the classes more lecture-based or discussion-based?
- Would you describe any classes as especially innovative or project-based?
- How many of the classes are taught by a professor, and how many are taught by a teaching assistant?
- Are the professors accessible outside of class?
- Are there any especially popular classes or must-have professors?
- How much freedom do freshmen have in choosing courses?
- Are students usually able to take their first choice courses?
- How are freshman advisors assigned?
- Is it easy to change your major?
- How would you describe the freshman experience, in terms of advising or classes?
- Can undergraduates work with professors on research?
- Are there honors programs or capstone classes? If so, what are they like?
- Where are the best places to study on campus?
- Do any majors require seniors to write a thesis or complete a senior project?

ACADEMIC AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Can you get help from professors outside of the classroom?
- Is there free academic support or tutoring? Is it effective?
- What kind of resources are there for international student support and orientation?
- What kind of learning disability resources does the school offer?
- Is there a writing center to help with essays and research papers?
- Are academic advisers accessible and effective?
- How accessible and helpful are health services?
- Do students or administrators organize conversations for students to talk and discuss important issues/events?
- Are there social orientation programs for freshmen? Are they enjoyable?
- Is there career counseling? Is it helpful?

RESEARCH, INTERNSHIP AND STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

- What kind of opportunities exist for undergraduates to work on research or academic projects with professors?
- What kind of internships are available? Do a lot of students get internships?
- Are any departments known for their contribution to research?
- Do any majors prepare students to continue as researchers in a Master's or doctoral program?
- Do most students study abroad on a program through the school or an external program?
- Are there internship opportunities abroad?
- Are there opportunities through the school for summer internships or research?

EXTRACURRICULARS

- What are some of the most popular extracurriculars and why?
- What clubs or other opportunities exist for community service?
- Do sports play a large role on campus? What divisions are the sports teams?
- Can you talk about the (fill-in-the-blank) club?
- In what ways do students connect with and volunteer in the surrounding community?

RESIDENCE LIFE

- What are the dorms like? Are there lounges, laundry, and kitchens? Shared or private restrooms?
- Do certain dorms appeal to students with different interests, like a "healthy living" dorm?
- Do most students live in the dorms? What about after sophomore or junior year?
- How are the resident counselors? Do they plan social events for freshmen to get to know one another?
- What kind of food does the dining hall serve? Are there different options? How is it, really?
- Does the dining hall accommodate special dietary restrictions?

CAMPUS CULTURE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- Where do students tend to hang out on and off campus?
- How would you describe the presence of Greek life? Do a lot of students belong to fraternities or sororities?
- How ethnically diverse is the campus?
- How many international students are there? What countries do they come from?
- Do students stick around or go home on weekends?
- What are some big campus events, like homecoming or alumni weekend?
- Is it easy to get around campus or get off campus without a car?
- What transportation options are there around campus?
- Is it a safe area to walk around at night? What kind of safety measures are in place?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- What do you wish you had known going into freshman year?
- What do you wish you had asked on a campus tour when you were in my place?
- What surprised you about campus life here?
- Is there anything you wish you had done differently to improve your experience here?
- Are there any things you'd like to change about the school?
- What would be your most important advice for freshman?
- What's your favorite spot you've discovered on campus since arriving?

THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEW

For most admissions counselors, interacting with students who are interested in their college is a high point in their day. Being able to meet students who are considering the school that they represent is rewarding and provides the counselor with a chance to help guide students in their college application process. Here are some of the top suggestions that might help you succeed in your next interview.

- **Be Aware** – There are several kinds of interviews and while each one has similarities, it is important to know which kind of interview you will have in advance.
 - **Required Interview** – some colleges and scholarship programs require interviews for all students or for students who have made the decision to apply to a particular college that does not require the submission of SAT or ACT scores.
 - **Evaluative Interview** – the interviewer’s comments and thoughts about the interview will play some role in the admissions process.
 - **Non-evaluative / Informational Interview** – the interview serves an opportunity to get to know the student and to answer questions for the student and the family.
 - **Alumni Interview** – an interview conducted off-campus by an alum of the college and is usually non evaluative.
- **Be Prepared** – Know the basics about the school and know why you are visiting. (And no, “My mom dragged me here” is not an acceptable response). Have three thoughtful questions ready to ask the interviewer—questions that aren’t already answered in the school’s admission materials. Perhaps you might ask something specific about the department or major you hope to study or about the internships available in the department. Practice interviewing with a friend or parent.
- **Be the leader** – When you walk into the admissions office, take charge. Don’t let your parents check in with the front desk. This is your chance to introduce yourself as the leader in the college process. Don’t slink around in the corner on your smartphone tweeting about your annoyance.
- **Be Relaxed/Yourself** – The interview is an opportunity for you to get to know the college and for them to get to know you. Take a deep breath and be yourself during the interview and it will go well. Have a conversation; do not memorize a script. Feel free to ask questions.
- **Be Professional** – Admission officers understand that you are touring a college campus and that you are a high school student, so they are not expecting you to show up in a business suit. However, good impressions are important. Make sure you are neat and tidy so that the interviewer knows you are taking the interview seriously.
- **Be Careful** – The “interview” starts the minute you walk in the door. The front desk reception area staff notices everything, so be on your best behavior. No matter how many hours you have been with your parents and no matter how tired you are after the long car ride or flight, this is the time to shine.

INTERVIEWERS MIGHT ASK QUESTIONS LIKE THESE

- Why do you want to attend our college?
- What can you contribute to our college campus?

WHY THEY ASK

They want to know that you're really interested in their college. They also want to know what you can bring to the campus.

Talk about what you've learned about the college and why you feel it's the right place for you. (Remember that you have to research a college ahead of time to answer this type of question well.) Discuss your extracurricular activities and achievements that show your character.

INTERVIEWERS MIGHT ASK QUESTIONS LIKE THESE

- What three adjectives best describe you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

WHY THEY ASK

They want to see that you can think and speak about yourself.

Give examples of how your chosen adjectives describe you. Talk about how you've used your strengths to accomplish something. Talk about how you overcome your weaknesses. For example, you can say, "I have a hard time learning new languages, so I set aside more time to study them."

INTERVIEWERS MIGHT ASK QUESTIONS LIKE THESE

- What activities do you find most rewarding?
- What is your favorite book?
- What do you want to do after graduating from college?

WHY THEY ASK

They want to get to know you better and learn about what's important to you.

Think about the why: Why are those activities the most rewarding? Why is a book your favorite? If you have a major in mind, talk about why you're interested in that subject. Discuss how you think college can help you meet your goals. Be sincere and honest in your answer – don't say things just to impress the interviewer.

INTERVIEWERS MAY ASK SOME BROADER QUESTIONS

- If you had a thousand dollars to give away, what would you do with it?
- What's your opinion on the immigration debate (or another topic in the news)?
- If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

WHY THEY ASK

They want to see that you are informed and curious and a careful thinker.

Stay up-to-date on news and current events. Do you have strong opinions on certain issues? Can you explain your position? Try to spell out your system of values to yourself and think about how you apply it.

Sources:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews/what-to-do-before-and-after-your-college-interview-admissions>
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategie>