College Applications and Financial Aid

Basic Information

There are two formats for a college application: individual institution application or the Common Application. This handout will explain the process for the individual application and then address the differences found in the common app.

Individual Institution Application

Applications are all typically done online and each college or university has its own application procedures and requirements. For example, some colleges require essays as part of their application, some don’t. Some require letter(s) of recommendation, some don’t. Some have a deadline which you have to meet to apply, and some have rolling admission. To find out the requirements for the schools you are interested in applying to, please visit each school’s website and familiarize yourself with their application policies.

The following will outline materials and processes common to college applications, just realize that you may not need to supply all of the materials below based on your school’s requirements…

High School Transcripts

LCL uses an electronic transcript service called Parchment to send transcripts. Through Parchment students can request for their high school transcript to be sent to any college or university as well as NCAA or other institutions/individuals. It is fast and easy and allows you to make transcript requests at any time online.

To get started, go to [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com), enter “Lake Country Lutheran High School” where it says “enter the name of the school that has your transcript” or click on “create account” in the upper left, and fill in all profile information required to set up your account. Be sure to use your full given name (i.e. Matthew instead of Matt) and correct birth date. Once your profile is complete you will see a place to select “order” transcripts and you can enter your college or other receiver at that time. It’s usually a pretty smooth process, but every once in a while something gets confused. If that happens, just see Mrs. Olver to get it back on track.

Dual-Credit Transcripts

If you have taken any dual credit classes while in high school you also have a transcript from the college offering the class. To have those transcripts sent you will need to contact the college directly. Information for sending transcripts from CUNE and CUW can be found on the following web pages:

Concordia University, Nebraska (Spanish)

<http://wp.cune.edu/dualcredit/transcript-release/>

Concordia University, Wisconsin (English, Psychology, Sociology, Business Mgmt, etc.)

<https://helpspot.cuw.edu/helpspot/index.php?pg=kb.page&id=304>

ACT/SAT Scores

Colleges will require your SAT/ACT scores as part of your application. These scores are automatically sent as part of your LCL transcript, but most universities want “official” scores which means that they need to come directly from the testing agency, in which case you will need to request them from [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) (ACT) or [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (SAT). (You should have an account already set up at these agencies from when you registered to take the tests.)

AP Courses

The transfer of AP credits is at the discretion of the college or university to which you are applying. Scores should be sent to your colleges directly from the testing agency ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)) at which time the college will be able to determine whether or not they will accept the class for credit. Typically, these don’t need to be sent until you’ve been accepted and are planning to attend, but if you feel that having the admissions office see your scores as part of your application will help strengthen your profile, they can be sent along with the application materials.

Essays/Statements

If a college requires an essay or statement it is typically found in the body of the application and will consist of a question or series of questions that you can choose from. Please take your time writing your response - do it thoughtfully and with your best writing skills - but don’t try to overwrite it or make it more complicated than it needs to be. College admissions officers are really looking for an insight into who you are in your essay response.

If you feel that you would benefit from having someone take a look at your essay before you submit it, Mr. Oldenburg and Mrs. Griepentrog have both said that they would be happy to read application essays and offer advice. Feel free to ask one of these teachers for their help, but be sure to give them time to respond as they are busy people.

Letters of Recommendation

If your college requires letter(s) of recommendation along with your application, please ask your teacher or advisor for the letter early and get the letter to Mrs. Olver in either paper or electronic format (electronic format preferred). New this year, you should be able to make the request for your letters of recommendation to be sent to your colleges through your Parchment account. Please access your Parchment account online and select the option to send your Letter of Recommendation. Remember that Mrs. Olver will need to have received the letter from your or the teacher/advisor in order to be able to fulfill your request.

Counselor’s Recommendation

Often, colleges are looking for a recommendation from your high school counselor. These come in one of two formats: there will either be a form for you to print out and bring to Mrs. Olver, or there will be a place in the application for you to enter Mrs. Olver’s contact information and she will be notified by email.

Common App

The Common Application is a college application site where application information can be entered once and sent to multiple colleges, saving you time filling out numerous forms. However, it is important to note that not every college utilizes the common app. If your college is one of the ones that does, there will be a link on the school’s website or you can go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) to start the process.

As the Common App is designed to load all of your application materials into one place, there are a few differences to remember when applying to a common app school:

* your transcripts will NOT need to be requested through Parchment because they are required to be uploaded as part of the counselor’s recommendation
* letters of recommendation will also not need to be requested separately as they will be uploaded directly into your common app account by the recommender
* when you get to the counselor’s recommendation section please enter Mrs. Olver’s name and email address
* in the section for teacher or other recommenders please also make sure you enter both the name AND an accurate email address for your recommender. The email address is necessary for the recommender to be sent the request and instructions for uploading it to your account

Otherwise, the rest of the application should be pretty self-explanatory. If you have questions, see Mrs. Olver.

As an FYI, there are also several other resources available through the common app beyond the actual application (i.e. financial aid, scholarships, etc.) and they are available to any student (even those who won’t be applying through the common app.) Feel free to set up an account and look through the website at any time to utilize those resources.

Early Decision, Early Action, and Regular Decision

**Early decision** plans are binding - a student who is accepted as an ED applicant **must** attend the college if accepted.

**Early action** plans are nonbinding - students receive an **early** response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until the normal reply date of May 1.

**Regular decision** - follows all regular application deadlines and response times.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid paperwork can be filed as early as October 1 on the FAFSA website ([www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)). The earlier you are able to file after October 1st, the better, in terms of receiving stronger financial aid packages. Any financial aid package offered will be based on your family’s 2016 financial situation and tax documents.

LCL will be offering a Financial Aid seminar on September 18, 2017 at 7:00pm for families who want to understand the process better. Please add this date to your calendar if you would like to attend.

Scholarships

Hundreds of scholarships are available to students through many different schools and organizations. Information on these scholarships can be found in the following ways:

* The LCL website has links to several scholarship sites under the “Guidance” tab. More information will be added throughout the year as scholarship information is received at school, so please check the school website periodically for updates.
* A great amount of scholarship information can be found online. Just google “college scholarships” and there will be a large amount of information to sift through. It may take some time, but that time spent may pay off in funding for school.

Recommended Timeline

Sept. 1 - Nov. 30 Fill out college applications

 Make transcript requests

 Write essays

 Ask for recommendation letters to be written, turn in to Mrs. Olver

 Research and begin applying for scholarships

Oct. 1 Apply for Financial Aid

Your application process should be wrapped up by the end of November. If you take the time this fall, you can enjoy the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays without worry. ☺

Jan. 1 - Mar. 31 Continue to apply for Financial Aid (if you haven’t already)

 Continue to apply for Scholarships

May 1 Make final college selection

Feel free to contact Mrs. Olver at any time with questions, either in person or by email:

kolver@lakecountryhs.org