



School of Science and Engineering

“SEM...Where the possibilities are endless”

Gearing Up For Success!

2017-2018

Sophomore/Junior Parent Meeting

Andrew Palacios, Principal

Amanda Ashmead

Karina Hernandez, ASP

Naveen Kashyap, Counselor

April 12, 2018

Agenda

- STAFFING REPORT FOR NEXT YEAR
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- COLLEGE ACCESS OVERVIEW
- COLLEGE ACCESS TIMELINE
- SENIOR YEAR OVERVIEW

Staffing Updates



Upcoming Events: May and June

- ▶ Tuesday, May 1st, National Signing Day Celebration
- ▶ May 7th -May 11th, Teacher Appreciation Week
- ▶ May 7-18th, AP Exams
- ▶ TBD Yearbook Party, 4:30 - 9:00
- ▶ TBD: Awards Ceremony
- ▶ Tuesday, May 29th, SEM Graduation
- ▶ Thursday, May 31st and Friday, June 1st ACP/ Early Release @ 1:30
- ▶ Friday, June 1st, Last day of school
- ▶ Monday, June 11th, Report Cards mailed with fall registration dates

Upcoming Events: Summer

- ▶ Dates TBD:, Free SAT/ACT prep camps
- ▶ July 30-August 3rd, Physics Camp (invited rising sophomores)
- ▶ July 30 – August 3rd, Freshman NeSt (student volunteers needed!)
- ▶ August 1st-August 3rd, College Camp (all rising seniors)
- ▶ August 20th, First Day of School

College Access



What is the goal?

- ▶ For every students to be accepted to a college they are excited about
- ▶ For every student to have the money to stay at that school for four years
- ▶ For parents to have the knowledge they need to serve as informed advisors to their students
- ▶ To maintain emotional equilibrium

Explore your options!

- Play interviewer:
 - Students: ask your senior friends what advice they'd give on the college process.
 - What did they do well?
 - What do they wish they did while they had more time?
 - What do they wish they would have known?
 - What surprised them?
 - Parents: These are good questions for you to ask as well!

What do colleges want to know?

- ▶ Do you have hard skills?
 - ▶ Content knowledge
 - ▶ Reading/writing/math ability
 - ▶ Problem-solving
- ▶ Do you have soft skills?
 - ▶ Get along with people
 - ▶ Manage your time
 - ▶ Ask for help
 - ▶ Set goals and make plans
- ▶ Are you ambitious?
 - ▶ Do you have a passion for doing something?
 - ▶ Do you work to get the things you want?
- ▶ Are you interesting?
 - ▶ Do you have experiences or interests that give you insights or perspectives others might lack?
 - ▶ Do you actively participate in your community?

What do colleges look at?

All components have equal importance

- ▶ Coursework
- ▶ Grade Point Average
- ▶ SAT/ACT/ PSAT
- ▶ AP scores
- ▶ Extraordinary Circumstances
- ▶ Extra-Curricular Accomplishments
- ▶ College Essays
- ▶ Supplements
- ▶ Recommendation Letters
- ▶ Application

Your data: What do these things show to colleges?

- ▶ Coursework
 - ▶ AP vs. Regular classes
 - ▶ What electives?
- ▶ Transcript/Grade Point Average
 - ▶ Look at patterns across content areas and from year to year.
 - ▶ Cs are very bad.
- ▶ SAT/ACT/ PSAT
 - ▶ Percentiles are what matter
 - ▶ Colleges look at your best scores
 - ▶ Schools release averages
- ▶ AP scores

Your life: What do these show to colleges?

▶ Extra-Curricular Accomplishments

- ▶ Academic Competitions
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Community Service
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Summer Internships/Camps/Etc.
- ▶ Awards
- ▶ Any active hobby

▶ Extraordinary Circumstances

- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Death
- ▶ Illness
- ▶ First-Generation American
- ▶ Bilingual
- ▶ Underprivileged Minority
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Abuse

Essays and Recommendations: Context

▶ Essay

- ▶ Use a specific event or experience to show how you embody some of the things the college is looking for
- ▶ Demonstrate that you have the ability to think reflectively about your life and your experiences—that you know how to grow
- ▶ Show you have communication skills

▶ Recommendations

- ▶ Professional insights on how you learn and interact in an academic environment
- ▶ Outside perspectives on your skills and accomplishments
- ▶ Information about circumstances that are awkward for you to mention

SUMMER PROGRAMS

- Apply to summer programs!
 - Summer programs will prove to colleges that you can work in a setting away from home and will give you the opportunity to show your skills beyond school work.
 - Most summer programs feature final presentations or projects that can be used later to supplement your college applications.
 - Good way to meet new people and get ideas for college essays!



SUMMER PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

- Whether it's sports, music, community service (among other volunteer experiences), or a part-time job, you'll want to build your leadership skills!
- Take a class just for fun! Programming classes, cooking classes, photography classes or anything else is a great way to explore your interests. Whether it's through an online course, figure out what does (and doesn't) interest you!
- Remember, colleges want to know that you are more than grades and scores. Think about consistency and commitment in your summer activities. Dedication and depth count, no matter what it is!

Funding Issues: How much does college cost?

- ▶ Tuition and Fees
 - ▶ what it costs to just attend classes.
- ▶ Room and Board
 - ▶ What it costs to live on campus and have a meal plan
- ▶ Estimated Total Cost of Attendance
 - ▶ Tuition and Fees + Room and Board + Estimated cost of books, travel, technology, etc.
- ▶ Need-Blind Admissions policy.
 - ▶ School accepts students without considering ability to pay. Does not mean that they will help you pay.
- ▶ 100% Needs Met Financial Aid Policy
 - ▶ School will fill gap between “expected family contribution” and estimated cost of attendance.
 - ▶ Usually filled with combination of loans, work study, grants, and individual contribution.

Funding Issues: How do I pay for it?

- ▶ Institutional Grants and Scholarships
- ▶ Work Study
- ▶ Private scholarships
- ▶ Co-Op, Internships
- ▶ Subsidized Stafford Loans
 - ▶ Low interest, generous repayment plans
 - ▶ Annual limit is fairly low
- ▶ Parent Loans, Unsubsidized Private Loans
 - ▶ “Bad” loans

Merit Aid

- ▶ Based on grades, test scores, or other qualities desirable to the university
- ▶ Widely offered by public and private schools
- ▶ Is non-existent at the most selective schools.
- ▶ Is difficult to predict
- ▶ Is always a grant or scholarship

Need-Based Aid

- ▶ Based on ability to pay, as determined by two forms—FAFSA and the CSS.
- ▶ These look at income, household size and other factors to determine the **Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)**.
- ▶ You can estimate your EFC. Google “FAFSA4caster” and “College board EFC calculator”.
- ▶ The EFC expects households to have been saving for college expenses. The estimate is generally higher than what you could reasonably pay out of your income.
- ▶ Loans can be part of “need-based aid package”.

Private Scholarships

- ▶ Offered by organizations, clubs, businesses, etc.
- ▶ There are thousands of these.
- ▶ Generally small, non-renewable awards (\$500-\$2000)
- ▶ Generally sent to school, but any excess is refunded to student by the school for personal expenses.
- ▶ Each of these has to be applied for individually.

Timelines



Rising Juniors, Spring/Summer

- ▶ Spring
 - ▶ Maintain your grades
 - ▶ Do your best work on your AP exams
 - ▶ Explore summer options
- ▶ Summer
 - ▶ PSAT/SAT practice—Khan Academy is easiest.
 - ▶ Some sort of engaging activity/accomplishment—a passion project
 - ▶ College visits: UTD, SMU, Austin College, UNT

Rising Juniors, 2018-2019

▶ Fall

- ▶ Maintain or raise grades
- ▶ Work on a meaningful accomplishment
- ▶ Stay engaged in your community

▶ Spring

- ▶ Maintain or raise grades
- ▶ Work on your meaningful accomplishment
- ▶ Stay engaged in your community
- ▶ Study for and take the SAT (in March) and SAT subject tests (in May)

Rising Seniors, Spring 2018

- ▶ Spring
 - ▶ Grades! AP Exams!
 - ▶ Take SAT subject tests in May or June (waivers available)
 - ▶ Reflect on what you have accomplished and what you still can accomplish
 - ▶ Start researching colleges and creating a diverse college list
 - ▶ Do an extraordinarily good job on the senior survey after AP exams

Rising Senior Parents, Spring 2018

- FAFSA/TASFA Requirements
 - File 2017 taxes
 - Order 2017 IRS Tax Return Transcript
 - Call 1-800-908-9946
 - Set appointment by calling 1-844-545-5640
 - Order online at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

Rising Seniors, Summer

- ▶ Secure an internship or other meaningful work
- ▶ Work on meaningful accomplishment
- ▶ Attend 1 day college camp Aug 1-3 here at SEM.
- ▶ Visit colleges
- ▶ Study for ACT
 - ▶ Consider taking June ACT

Rising Seniors, Fall

▶ **September**

- ▶ Take ACT
- ▶ Apply for Fly Outs
- ▶ Finalize College List
- ▶ Work on Essays and supplements
- ▶ Request Rec Letters
- ▶ Attend College Recruitment Meetings

▶ **October**

- ▶ FASFA/CSS
 - ▶ Make Decisions about money
- ▶ Finish Texas public school applications
- ▶ Early Action/Early Decision due Nov 1st

Rising Seniors, Fall/Spring

▶ **November/ December**

- ▶ Refine Lists
- ▶ Finalize Regular Applications
- ▶ Look for Early Decision Responses
- ▶ Turn in Award Letters
- ▶ Apply for Private Scholarships

▶ **Spring**

- ▶ Mid-year Reports
- ▶ Scholarship Applications
- ▶ Housing Deposits
- ▶ Review Financial Aid Packages
- ▶ Admitted Students Weekends

Senior Year



Major Senior Milestones

- ▶ Fall:
 - ▶ Payments for Prom (~\$90), Picnic (~\$50),
 - ▶ Payment for Cap and Gown (~\$50)
- ▶ Spring:
 - ▶ Major events: Prom, Picnic, Post-AP field trips and luncheon, Panoramic Picture, Signing Day
 - ▶ GRADUATION
 - ▶ Fees to be determined
- ▶ Senior Night and other fundraisers: Flexible