

Verbum Dei High School
2015-2016
COLLEGE COUNSELING HANDBOOK



Verbum Dei High School
11100 S. Central Avenue • Los Angeles, CA 90059
Phone: 323-564-6651 • Web: www.verbumdei.us

**COLLEGE COUNSELING
DEPARTMENT**

Department Hours

Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm

Dr. Martinique Starnes

Dean of Counseling and Student Affairs

Phone: 323-564-6651 x6500

Email: mbelgarde@verbumdei.us

Mrs. Antoinette Bowie-Smith

11th & 12th Grade School Counselor

Phone: 323-564-6651 x6510

Email: abowie@verbumdei.us

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COLLEGE SYSTEMS

Colleges/Universities are typically referred to as being either "Public" or "Private." The major distinction between the two is primarily a matter of the source of each institution's funding; public institutions of higher education (Public Schools) are funded by the state government, while private institutions (Private Schools) are self-sustaining and responsible for their own fundraising.

California Colleges/Universities

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (Public)

The University of California is home to more than 208,000 students and welcomes thousands of new students each year; with another 60,000 on their way in the next decade. The University of California is regarded as the state's premier public university system. The University of California system has ten campuses (UC – Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz).

MORE INFO – www.universityofcalifornia.edu

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY (Public)

The California State University is one of the largest, most diverse, and most affordable university systems in the world. Home to more than 405,000 students, the California State University offers a high-quality, accessible, student-focused educational experience. The California State University system has 23 campuses (CSU – Bakersfield, Channel Islands, Chico, Dominguez Hills, East Bay, Fresno, Fullerton, Humboldt, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Maritime, Monterey Bay, Northridge, Pomona, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, San Marcos, Sonoma, and Stanislaus).

MORE INFO – www.calstate.edu

CALIFORNIA INDEPENDENT COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES (Private)

California is home to some of the world's most prestigious and innovative private/independent colleges. Some notable California independent colleges/universities include Stanford University, California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech), University of Southern California (USC), Loma Linda University, Santa Clara University, Loyola Marymount University, Pepperdine University, Occidental College, University of San Diego, University of San Francisco, Chapman University, University of La Verne, Whittier College, and Soka University.

MORE INFO (partial list of CA Independent Colleges/Universities) – www.aiccu.edu

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES (Public)

Composed of 110 two-year public institutions of higher education, the California Community College system offers over 2.5 million students access to a quality education. The California Community College system represents the largest public education system in the world. Students typically take classes at a community college for up to two years, potentially earning an Associate's Degree and then transfer to a four-year university to earn a Bachelor's Degree. Some notable Southern California community colleges include Santa Monica College, LA Southwest College, Citrus College, LA Harbor College, East LA College, Mt. San Antonio College, West LA College, Rio Hondo College, LA Trade Technical College, LA Valley College, Moorpark College, Orange Coast College, LA City College, Irvine Valley College, San Bernardino Valley College, and the College of the Desert.

MORE INFO – www.cccco.edu

PLEASE NOTE: Out-of-State Colleges/Universities are organized in a similar manner within their own state.

COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

All colleges/university require that prospective students submit an admission application and supplemental documentation. Each college/university bases its admission decision on various pieces of information that can be extracted from a student's admissions application and supplemental documentation. Below you will find a general outline and brief explanation of the College Admissions Process and the documents most often required to complete an admissions application.

APPLICATION

All colleges/universities require prospective students to submit an admissions application. Typically an application fee is required when the application is submitted. Application fees range from \$10 - \$100. Information about College Application Fee Waivers for low-income qualified families may be obtained by contacting Verbum Dei High School's College Guidance Department. **NOTE:** Some colleges/universities will waive the application fee if an application is submitted on-line.

OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

All colleges and universities require that students send an official copy of their high school transcript as a part of the admissions application process. Colleges/Universities use the high school transcript to review a prospective student's academic record (grades) and in many cases will also accept SAT/ACT scores that are printed on the high school transcript. **NOTE:** Official HS Transcripts are available in the College Guidance Department. Also, if a student has successfully completed coursework at a community college, an official college transcript should be sent directly from the community college to the colleges/universities that the student is applying to.

OFFICIAL SAT & ACT SCORES

Most four-year colleges/universities require that standardized test results from the College Board (SAT Reasoning Test/Subjects Test) and/or the American College Test (ACT) be sent directly to each college/university that the student is applying to. **NOTE:** Many colleges/universities will accept SAT/ACT scores if they appear on the official high school transcript.

PROMPTED ESSAY

Many colleges/universities will require prospective students to submit an essay. Essays are typically required to be type-written and one-to-two pages in length. Essay instructions and topics may be found in the admission application. **NOTE:** It is recommended to seek the assistance of an English teacher or tutor when drafting and revising a prompted essay. Verbum Dei High School seniors receive assistance with their prompted essays in their English 4 A/B class.

PERSONAL ESSAY

Some colleges/universities will allow students to submit a personal essay with no prompted essay topic. Prospective students should take advantage of this opportunity by sharing personal information about themselves (strengths, triumph over hardship, professional/career goals, etc.) in the essay.

LIST OF PERSONAL & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

It is highly recommended that students submit a detailed list of their personal and extracurricular activities with their admissions application. Students should list anything and everything that they are involved in not pertaining to classroom work (i.e. – student government, sports, clubs, organizations, work experience, community service, church related activities, travel, and/or hobbies).

LETTER/S OF RECOMMENDATION

Prospective college students should gather letters of recommendation primarily from high school teachers, counselors, and administrators. It may also prove helpful to secure letters of recommendation from work supervisors, coaches, and community organizations. **NOTE:** We recommend that seniors secure two letters of recommendation from VDHS teachers and one letter of recommendation from the College Guidance Department (only if required by College/University).

FINANCIAL AID PROCESS

All colleges/universities offer financial aid to assist families pay for the ever-rising cost of higher education. Once a prospective student is admitted to a college/university, it becomes the responsibility of the college/university to make its education affordable for the student's family based on the family's ability to pay. A family's ability to pay for the cost of higher education at any given college/university is determined using information extracted from financial aid documentation that must be gathered and submitted by both prospective students and parents. Below you will find a general outline and brief explanation of the Financial Aid Process and the documents most often required to complete a financial aid application.

FEDERAL PIN REGISTRATION (STUDENTS AND PARENTS)

The U.S. Department of Education requires that all students (and their parents) who are applying for Federal and/or State financial aid register for a pin number (one for the student and one for at least one parent/guardian). Students and parents may register for a pin number on-line by visiting www.pin.ed.gov.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

All prospective college students applying for financial aid at any four-year or two-year college/university needs to submit a FAFSA by no later than March 2nd in the second semester of their senior year. Both students and parents will have to complete the FAFSA together. Information in the FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for Federal and State grants, work study, and loan programs. The information on the FAFSA is also used by colleges/universities to determine eligibility for university aid. **NOTE:** The FAFSA may be submitted beginning January 1st in the second semester of the senior year. **MORE INFO – www.fafsa.ed.gov**

GPA VERIFICATION FORM

All students living in the state of California, who may attend college in California and apply for financial aid, should submit a GPA Verification Form to the State of California. CAL Grants (Free money for students attending CA colleges) are awarded based on financial need (as determined by information from the FAFSA) and a verifiable high school GPA. **NOTE: All Verbum Dei High School seniors have their GPAs electronically reported to the state of California by the VDHS College Guidance Department – There is nothing further that you need to do!**

CSS PROFILE

Some Independent/Private Colleges require that the CSS Profile be completed in addition to the FAFSA in order to be considered for university aid. The CSS Profile is similar to the FAFSA and asks both students and parents to report income information. Check the financial aid requirements for each college you plan on attending and see if they require the submission of the CSS Profile.

MORE INFO - www.CollegeBoard.com

TAX RETURNS

Both prospective students and parents are required to submit copies of their tax returns (from the previous year) to each college/university where they are applying for financial aid. The tax returns are used to verify any income information that is reported on the FAFSA and/or the CSS Profile. If either the parent and/or the student did not file taxes for the previous year, then they may submit a non-filer tax statement.

Types of Financial Aid

- **Institutional/Gift Aid (Free Money)** – Student grants & scholarships awarded by colleges or private organizations.
- **Federal Aid (Various)** – Student grants, loans, and work study programs.
- **California State Aid (Free Money)** – Student grants and community college fee waivers (must attend college in CA).
- **Private Loans** – Parent loans from private financial institutions.

COMMITMENT, ORIENTATION, PLACEMENT TESTING, REGISTRATION, & ENROLLMENT

COMMITMENT

Students and parents should carefully consider all college/university acceptances. Once a decision has been made as to which college/university the student would like to attend, then the student must formally make a commitment to the college. Committing to a college/university typically requires that a monetary deposit ranging from \$100 - \$400 be made to reserve the student's space in the entering freshmen class. Committing to a college may also require a Housing Deposit be made. Housing deposits range in price from \$200 - \$800. **NOTE:** If paying the commitment deposit at a college/university presents a financial hardship to a family, then the family should contact the Admission Office and request that the commitment deposit fee be waived if possible. Housing deposits are rarely waived, but it never hurts to call the Campus Housing Department to request that the deposit be waived if needed.

ORIENTATION, PLACEMENT TESTING, & REGISTRATION

Once a student has committed to a college/university, then they will be invited to attend New Student Orientation. In most cases, students and parents are invited to come to campus for a day of activities to better acclimate themselves with college/university policies and procedures. Parents often meet with deans, faculty, and staff members from various academic departments, financial aid, and the business office (You know they want you to pay your bill!). Students will often meet with upperclassmen peer mentors who will introduce them to college/university life. Students will also have an opportunity to take placement tests (typically in Math & English), meet with academic advisors, and register for their upcoming semester classes. **NOTE:** Some colleges and universities (like the CSU System) may require that placement testing be completed prior to attending New Student Orientation.

ENROLLMENT

A student is considered "Enrolled" at a college/university once they have made a commitment (including a housing deposit if the student is living on campus), attended orientation, registered for classes, and paid their tuition bill or made arrangements to do so.

TUTORING & ACT/SAT PREPARATION SERVICES

Below you will find a preferred listing of tutoring and/or ACT/SAT preparation services. All of those programs listed below have established a positive track record in working with students from Verbum Dei High School. This list does not represent all tutoring and test preparation services available and we encourage all juniors & seniors to get involved in ACT/SAT preparation even if it is not with an organization listed below.

ACADEMIC CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (TUTORING & SAT PREP)

Glory Christian Fellowship International and the University of California have teamed up to offer tutoring services and SAT Test Prep for high school students (Grades 9-12). The Academic Center of Excellence is open Monday – Thursday (3:30 PM – 8:00 PM) and services are offered by appointment only. For more information, please contact **Nancy Barbee** at **(310) 538-6943**.

KAISER PERMANENTE WATTS COUNSELING AND LEARNING CENTER (ACT/SAT PREP)

The Kaiser Permanente Watts Counseling and Learning Center offers a 9-week, ACT (Summer)/SAT (Fall or Spring) Prep class taught by PRINCETON REVIEW! Classes meet on Saturday mornings. The cost of the Princeton Review ACT/SAT Prep program has been significantly reduced from \$800 to a very affordable, **\$50**. For more information, please contact Program Coordinator, **Maria Aguirre** at **(323) 564-7911** right away! Space is limited!