



# **Beating the Early Application Rush: Partnering with Post-Secondary Institutions to Lighten the Load for the College Application Process**

Christine Voice, School Counselor, Kohler High School  
Mark Swenson, Alumni Relations Manager, University of  
Wisconsin-Madison

# Kohler High School and UW Madison

Kohler High  
Public, K-12 Building  
Suburban/Rural  
228 students in 9-12  
56 in 2019 graduating class

95% attend two or four year  
college

2017 Kohler High Recognitions:  
Newsweek: America's Top High Schools  
The Washington Post: America's Most  
Challenging Schools  
College Board AP Honor Roll

University of Wisconsin - Madison

- Madison, WI, est  
population 250,000

Public, flagship, land-grant  
institution founded in 1848

43,300 total students  
29,900 undergraduates  
• 6,800 new freshmen (2018)

140 Major Offerings in 8 Schools &  
Colleges



# Partnership

KHS created College  
Counseling position in 2012

Intentional in developing  
college-readiness program

Junior Class Visit to  
UW-Madison

UW Madison high school visits  
in Fall or Spring

Invited to Junior College  
Morning Panel in May

Invited to College Application  
Event in Summer for incoming  
Seniors



# Format of Junior College Application Event

## Day 1

8-11:30am UW System  
application

12:30-3pm Common  
Application

## Day 2

Essay Writing  
Do's and Don'ts Presentation

Brainstorming Activities

Writing Time/Review of Essays

Request teacher/counselor  
letters



# UW System Application

<https://apply.wisconsin.edu>

What's on [the application](#)..

Things to bring:

transcript

resume/activities

SSN

ACT login

Parent address



# Common Application

The screenshot shows the Common Application dashboard. At the top left is the logo "THE COMMON APPLICATION". At the top right, it says "Welcome, Jeanine!" and "First Year | CAID 16553723". Below the logo is a navigation bar with tabs: "Dashboard", "My Colleges", "Common App", "College Search", and "Financial Aid Resources". The "My Colleges" tab is active, showing a table of colleges. To the right of the table are sections for "Instructions and Help" and "Application Term Dictionary".

My Colleges (9)	Writing Requirements	Deadline	Application	Writing Supplement	Remove
▶ Brown University	▶ ◀ ▶	01/01/2017	●	—	🗑️
▶ Capital University	▶ ◀	—	●	—	🗑️
▶ Fairfield University	▶ ◀	01/15/2017	●	—	🗑️
▶ Juniata College	▶	12/01/2016	●	—	🗑️
▶ Mercer University	▶	—	●	—	🗑️
▶ New York University	▶ ◀	—	●	—	🗑️

**Instructions and Help**  
▶

**Application Term Dictionary**  
Not familiar with the application lingo? Our application...  
[more] ▶

**What are the Writing Requirements?**  
Click on a college, then on the Writing Requirements tab to understand what different college ... [+]  
[more] ▶

<http://www.commonapp.org/ready>

<http://www.commonapp.org/files/ready-resources/CommonAppReady-TipsBestPractices.pdf>

# Essay Writing Pre Work

Brainstorming activities; [College Essay Guy](#)

- \*pictures

- \*values

- \*storytelling

Have them research their schools

Share [the prompts](#)

Junior Year ELA course

Junior College Morning



# Essay Writing

Essays an integral piece of application - Writing ability, effort, unique information, interest, and campus fit

What are we seeing as counselors?

## Do's and Dont's Recommendations

**Don't:** Allow for errors, overlook the prompt, emphasize the negative or place blame for shortcomings, wait until the last minute

**Do:** Be honest and confident, be specific, think of essay as opportunity to introduce yourself, be creative!, develop drafts and proofread





# Requesting teacher and counselor letters

## Counselor Form

\*Learn about the student as a person and contributing member to the community

## Teacher Form

\*Gather info about the student as a learner and academic interests/talents

## Parent Form

\*Demonstrates growth, share anecdotes



# Reviewing Senior year Timeline

## September

Attend College Application Boot Camp (application work and essay support) \*August\*

Attend College Fairs and Meet with College Representatives

Attend NACAC College Fair in Milwaukee

Retake the SAT or ACT as needed

Check if your schools require SAT II Subject Tests

Request Letters of Recommendation from Teachers using Naviance

Complete Senior Questionnaire and submit to Mrs. Voice

## October

Finalize your college list

Finish your personal statement/essay

Work on your supplemental essays

Submit your FAFSA; Prior Year application

Check if your schools require CSS Profile

Financial Aid Parent Night and/or College Goal Wisconsin

Submit your Early Action or Early Decision application (if applicable)

Request ACT/SAT scores be sent to your schools

## November & December

If you haven't already, finalize and submit all of your applications

Request transcripts be sent to your schools

Review College websites for Scholarship deadlines

## January-March

Fight off Senioritis

Apply for Scholarships; college specific, Naviance, and FastWeb

Send thank you cards to those who helped with college apps and letters

## March-May

Hear back from colleges (Celebrate!)

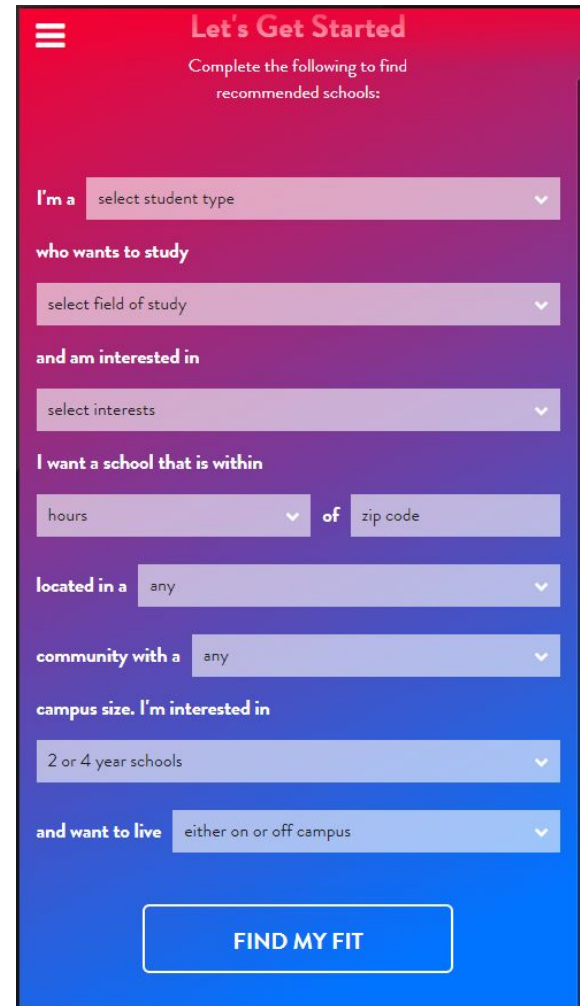
Decide where you'll spend the next four years.

Send deposits by May 1



# Finding Fit

- UW Help Journey App
  - Great college search starting point for UW-System
- Identify and evaluate important factors
  - Location, size, academic offerings, cost, etc
- Research!
- Visit campus if possible
- NACAC Step by Step College Awareness and Planning curriculum
  - Useful for secondary and higher ed professionals



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface titled "Let's Get Started" with a red header. Below the title, it says "Complete the following to find recommended schools:". The form consists of several sections, each with a dropdown menu:

- "I'm a" with a dropdown menu showing "select student type".
- "who wants to study" with a dropdown menu showing "select field of study".
- "and am interested in" with a dropdown menu showing "select interests".
- "I want a school that is within" with two dropdown menus: "hours" and "zip code", separated by the word "of".
- "located in a" with a dropdown menu showing "any".
- "community with a" with a dropdown menu showing "any".
- "campus size. I'm interested in" with a dropdown menu showing "2 or 4 year schools".
- "and want to live" with a dropdown menu showing "either on or off campus".

At the bottom of the form is a large blue button with the text "FIND MY FIT".

Via [www.uwjourney.wisconsin.edu](http://www.uwjourney.wisconsin.edu)

# Advanced Placement (AP) Curriculum

- Parent night presentation on school curriculum/rigor opportunities for underclassmen
- Provide collegiate take on value of advanced level coursework
  - ex.
- Discuss how curriculum and rigor plays into college admissions processes
- Great opportunity for students and families to hear from another perspective what counselors have been sharing about academic offerings



# Mock Application Review

- Goal to increase student knowledge of review process and discuss how students can prepare themselves to be competitive applicants
- Helpful in providing context and background for what admissions counselors and readers do in evaluation of applicants
- Students review, discuss, and make argument for a decision based upon materials provided
  - GPA, transcripts, test scores, school profile, essays, activity summary, etc
- Piloted activity at UW-Madison
  - Potential to be a beneficial activity for not only rising juniors but underclassmen



# How you can replicate this program as a school counselor

- Use attached forms to support student letters of recommendation
- Utilize online resources such as UW System Help, College Board, and College Essay Guy
- Get support of your administration to incorporate into school day
- Connect with college admissions contacts on potential collaboration
- Actively engage with College Admission representatives; college fairs, site visits, professional associations



# How you can replicate this program as an admission representative

- Get support from supervisor/office to create and administer workshop topics
  - Proposal for outreach
  - Who would be a good fit?
- Connect with school counselor contacts on potential collaboration
  - Building on already established programming
- Actively engage with college admissions colleagues; college fairs/nights, professional associations
- Utilize [NACAC Step by Step Curriculum](#) and other available resources



Mark Swenson, Alumni Relations Manager, University of  
Wisconsin-Madison

[mark.swenson@wisc.edu](mailto:mark.swenson@wisc.edu)

Christine Voice, School Counselor, Kohler High School

[voiccec@kohler.k12.wi.us](mailto:voiccec@kohler.k12.wi.us)

