

Highlands Christian Academy  
Counseling and Guidance Department



Academic and College Advisement

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## **Introduction**

Highlands Christian Academy is dedicated to the process of assisting parents in the biblical training of students in all aspects of Christian education and living. The Bible is clear that God has a purpose and a plan for His children:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart;"  
Jeremiah 1:5a (NIV)

The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.  
Psalm 121:8 (NIV)

We, at Highlands, want to afford every opportunity for success to the students that God has allowed to come under the instruction and leadership of this institution. College planning and advisement is an area that HCA takes seriously, and an area that we want our students and parents to be educated and informed, in order to prayerfully make the best decision for the future.

## **Student Advisement**

Each student in the high school will have the opportunity to meet with the Guidance and Counseling Department, both individually and as a class, numerous times between their freshmen and senior years.

- Freshmen will meet as a class a minimum of two times during the year, in order to discuss class selection, Florida Bright Futures Scholarships, and any other academic concerns they may be having/
- Sophomores will follow the basic schedule as the Freshmen, with a time set aside for the evaluation of their Freshmen grades, and a brief discussion on Dual Enrollment, the PSAT, and general college information.
- Juniors will have the opportunity to meet with the Guidance and Counseling Department twice as a class and at least once individually. These meetings will focus on SAT/ACT Tests, college planning, Florida Bright Futures Scholarship, evaluation of transcripts, and senior class scheduling.
- Seniors will meet at least twice as a class and at least twice individually. Students may also set up other appointments throughout the year at their convenience. Advisement will focus on choosing a college or university, finalizing transcripts, evaluating schedules, and finishing any testing requirements. Eligible students will also sign-up for Florida Bright Futures during the first semester (date determined by the state).

Each student who attends HCA starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade will have the opportunity to meet with a counselor at least 11 times before graduation. HCA is not only concerned about the academic success of our students now, but about their preparedness for the future.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent Conferences will be held throughout the year for the different grade levels. Meetings will focus on academic preparedness, college planning, college financial aid, and the present concerns each parent will be having. Parents are also free to schedule an appointment with the Guidance and Counseling Department by calling 954-421-1747 or by emailing Mr. Parker at [derek.parker@highlandschristian.org](mailto:derek.parker@highlandschristian.org). Parents are encouraged to be an active part of the college decision process and HCA wants to assist parents in this practice.

## **SAT / ACT Information**

“The SAT Reasoning Test is the most widely used and most rigorously researched college admissions test in history. Virtually every college in the United States accepts the SAT as a measure of the critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems—skills learned in school that are needed in college. The test also provides an independent measure of a student’s college readiness that is standardized across all students, schools, and communities, providing a common and objective scale for comparison.” (Taken from [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com))

The ACT is universally accepted for college admission in the U.S. The ACT is accepted by virtually all colleges and universities in the U.S., including all the Ivy League schools.

The ACT multiple-choice tests are curriculum based. The ACT is not an aptitude or an IQ test. Instead, the questions on the ACT are directly related to what you have learned in your high school courses in English, mathematics, reading, and science. Because the ACT tests are based on what is taught in the high school curriculum, students are generally more comfortable with the ACT than they are with traditional aptitude tests or tests with narrower content. (Taken from [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org))

Students are encouraged to register for both the SAT and the ACT during the second semester of their junior year. Most colleges require a minimum score on either the SAT or ACT in order to be considered for admission. Registration packets can be obtained in the Guidance and Counseling Department, or students can register online. Preparation booklets are available on campus, as well as on the websites for the test.

HCA's school code for both the SAT and ACT is **101434**.

To register online, visit:

SAT: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

ACT: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

### **2009 – 2010 Test Dates (Registration Deadlines)**

#### **SAT**

October 10 (September 9)  
November 7 (October 1)  
December 5 (October 30)  
January 23 (December 15)  
March 13 (February 4)  
May 1 (March 25)  
June 5 (April 29)

#### **ACT**

September 12 (August 7)  
October 24 (September 18)  
December 12 (November 6)  
February 6 (January 5)  
April 10 (March 5)  
June 12 (May 7)

### **Choosing a College**

Choosing a school should not be done without first praying and then researching the many possibilities that are available. The following is a quick timeline that students and parents can follow, starting during the junior year:

1. Compile a list of schools (as many as you want) – This will be much shorter by the senior year
2. Visit the schools during Spring Break and over the summer if possible
3. Take both the SAT and ACT at least once, no more than three times
4. Select a challenging senior year schedule

When looking at colleges it is also important to consider entrance requirements, location, majors, extracurricular activities, cost, and graduation rates. However, God's Word is clear that His plans may not always be our plans, so it is important to be open to God's leading and direction. By their senior year, students should have narrowed their college selections to 3-6 possibilities (1-2 schools that may be a reach; 1-2 that are a good fit; and, 1-2 that are safe).

Colleges will be looking at GPA, transcripts, test scores, extracurricular activities, and recommendations. Good colleges will want the best, well-rounded students.

## College Resources

The best resource for college selection is your personal initiative. College and university websites contain an overabundance of information to help you make the most informed decision. Other useful tools can be college guidebooks, which are easily located at most book stores; websites such as [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) are also very useful. The Counseling and Guidance Department also has some resources available, such as catalogs and videos from some schools.

## College Visits

Visiting colleges allows you to see aspects and perspectives that would normally not be available to you online or in brochures. College visits also allow you the opportunity to be on campus and get the “feel” for what it would be like to spend time there. Here are 9 points to consider when considering a college visit:

1. Call in advance to find out when tours are given
2. Plan several hours for visits
3. Visit no more than two colleges per day
4. Talk to students at the school
5. Eat in the cafeteria
6. If possible, visit classes
7. Talk to professors in the department of interest
8. Make sure the school has a record of you being there
9. Take your list of questions

## Registering with the NCAA Clearinghouse

All prospective student-athletes intending to enroll in an NCAA Division I or II institution for the first time on or after August 1, 2007 must complete the NCAA Amateurism Certification questionnaire at the beginning of their senior year.

To register, go to [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)

SAT / ACT scores must be sent directly from the testing agency using code 9999

Transcripts sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse must be official and marked as such.

## College Applications

Juniors and Seniors will have the opportunity to meet the Guidance and Counseling Department in order to discuss the college application process. A few points to remember about applying to college are:

1. Start early, even if you don't have all relevant information. Students should mail all college applications before Christmas Break
2. Don't apply to just one college
3. Know the application deadlines for your college choices
4. Give your teachers, counselors, etc. adequate time to complete recommendation forms and letters if needed for your application
5. Consider your essay and have a teacher proofread
6. Request transcripts be sent from HCA
7. Don't procrastinate – colleges recognize procrastination

Students need to turn in a copy of all acceptance letters, scholarship awards, etc. to the Guidance and Counseling Department for record keeping purposes.

## Scholarships and Financial Aid

Scholarships are available through colleges, organizations, corporations, and some private foundations. Researching scholarship opportunities can be best accomplished through the Internet.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarships are also available through the state to eligible graduates. Requirements can be found at

[www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/) or by contacting the Guidance and Counseling Department. Applications for Bright Futures are filled out only during the senior year; students may not apply after graduation.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can be researched and applications can be filled out at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). FAFSA prefers online applications, but forms can be found in the Guidance and Counseling Department. Some colleges have their own forms to be filled out separately, or along with FAFSA, so it is important to check with the individual schools of your choice.

## Highlands Christian Academy School Profile

### **The School**

Highlands Christian Academy is a fully accredited, K-12 private Christian school located in Pompano Beach, FL. The school has been operating since 1965 and has earned a positive reputation in the community. HCA is accredited by the **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools** and by the **Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools**. The school's average attendance over the past 5 years has been 872 students total.

### **The Curriculum**

The **academic program** is organized on a traditional, 7 periods daily rotating schedule. A maximum load is 7 classes per semester, with each student attending each class for 50 minutes on a daily basis.

A minimum of **25 credits is required for graduation**. ½ credit = 1 semester; 1 credit = 1 year. Graduation requirements include: 1 credit (for each year enrolled) Bible; 4 credits (4 years) English; 3 credits (3 years) Mathematics; 3 credits (3 years) Science; 3 credits (3 years) Social Studies ( ½ credit American Government, ½ credit Economics, 1 credit American History, 1 credit World History); 1 credit (1 year) PE/Health; ½ credit (1 semester) Practical Arts; ½ credit (1 semester) Performing Arts; ½ credit (1 semester) Life Management; ½ credit (1 semester) Computers; additional 5 credits in elective or core classes.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** is offered for English/Literature. The pass rate (3, 4, or 5) over the past three years has been close to 70%.

**Honors Classes** are offered in: English I, II, III; Algebra I and II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus; American Government, Economics, World History, American History; Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics; Spanish I and II.

Electives are offered in: Art, Speech, Drama, Journalism, Weight Training, Chorus, Band, Computers, Education, Office Management, Life Science.

### **Grading and Ranking**

HCA assigns letter grades using a **4.0** system. Letter grades are assigned as follows: A = 90% - 100%; B = 80% - 89%; C = 70% - 79%; D = 60% - 69%; F = 59% and less.

All credit classes are included in computing grade point average and class rank. AP and Honors course grades are **weighted** and calculated into the students G.P.A., with their un-weighted, earned grade appearing on their transcript.

### **College Attendance History**

Over the last 5 years HCA has graduated 279 students. Of those graduates 90% continued their education after high school, either in 2 or 4 year institutions. Close to 50% of HCA graduates qualify for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.