



College Applications

(Your “HOW TO” Guide)

School Counseling Team
GKHS CUSD #424

What kind of college/university is right for ME?

- 2-year (community colleges) **vs.** 4-year colleges and univ.
- Choose the college option that is best for **YOU!**
 - Degree you will earn
 - Major and/or minor
 - Location
 - Extracurricular activities and/or sports
- **Schedule your college visits!**
 - *Would you buy a house before you saw it?*
 - Day visits
 - Overnight visits
- How many schools to apply to: **About 5!**
 - **2 “SAFE” schools**
 - **2 “AT-YOUR-LEVEL” schools**
 - **1 “REACH” school**

How to apply? (General Steps)

*Most colleges will require you to apply online!
(some still have paper applications though)

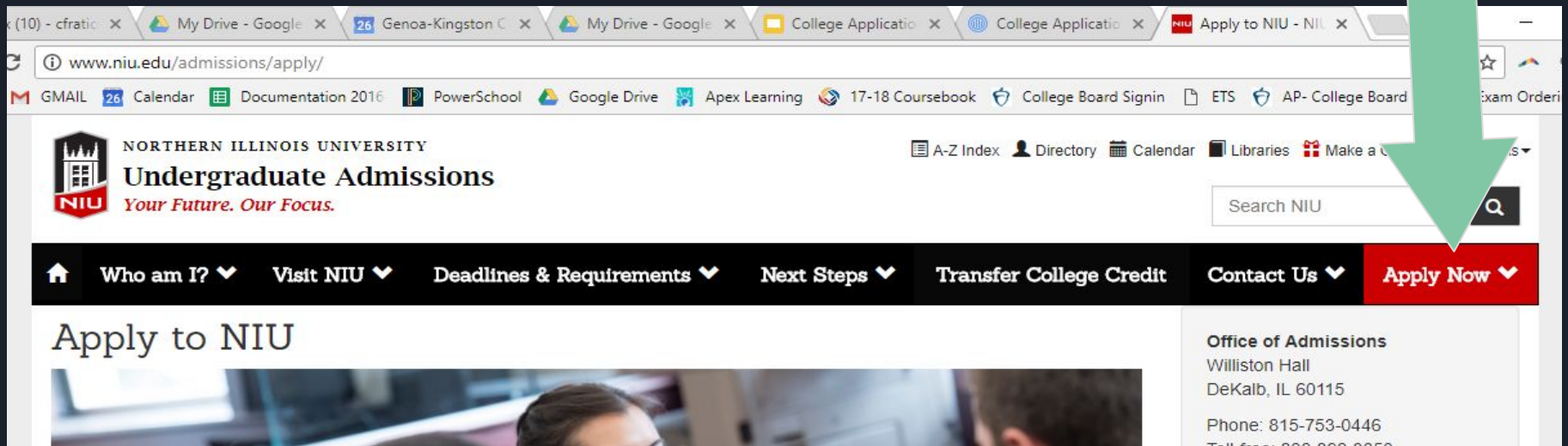
STEPS TO FOLLOW:

- Do an internet search (eg. Google) for the college or university you want to apply to...
- Find the application under the **Admissions** tab or other related tab
- Some will ask you to create an account
- Complete the application (save if not finished!)

Keywords to look for...

- “Apply”
- “Future Student”
- “Prospective Student”
- “Admissions” or “Undergraduate Admissions”

*Choose the **freshman** application!



The screenshot shows the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Undergraduate Admissions website. The browser address bar displays www.niu.edu/admissions/apply/. The page header includes the NIU logo and the text "NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY Undergraduate Admissions Your Future. Our Focus." A navigation menu at the top contains links for "Who am I?", "Visit NIU", "Deadlines & Requirements", "Next Steps", "Transfer College Credit", "Contact Us", and "Apply Now". A large green arrow points to the "Apply Now" button. Below the navigation menu, the page title is "Apply to NIU". On the right side, contact information for the Office of Admissions is provided: Williston Hall, DeKalb, IL 60115, Phone: 815-753-0446, and Toll-free: 800-899-2059.

What might I need to apply?

- **Transcript!**
- **SAT and/or ACT Scores (WITH writing or WITHOUT?- ASK!)**
 - ◆ Most 2- year colleges will accept them on your transcript
 - ◆ Some 4- year colleges will accept them on your transcript
 - ◆ Most 4-year colleges will require them to be sent from CollegeBoard/ACT.org
- **Letter of Recommendation**
 - ◆ Not required for almost all 2-year colleges
 - ◆ Some 4-year colleges require this
- **Admissions essay**
 - ◆ Not required for almost all 2-year colleges
 - ◆ Some 4-year colleges require this
- **List of extracurricular activities, community service, and honors**
 - ◆ Not required for almost all 2-year colleges
 - ◆ ALMOST ALL 4-year colleges require this

Application Type and Process...

DEPENDS ON THE TYPE OF COLLEGE!

- ❖ **2- year community colleges/vocational schools**
 - More simplified process (less required)
 - Enrollment form (online or hard copy)
- ❖ **4-year colleges and universities**
 - More involved process
 - Individual application for institution OR Common Application (if applicable) OR Coalition (if applicable)

2 Year Community College/Vocational School

*Not technically an application → **Enrollment Form**

*What is required:

- Complete and submit the Enrollment form (online or hard copy) *(We can fax the form for you!)*
- **Submit transcript** request to Ms. Miranda
- Meet with an academic advisor at the College
- Sit for **placement testing** (if necessary)
 - SAT/ACT scores can place you into entry level classes
 - C or better in Foundations of Math or Trig/Pre-Calc places you into college-level math at Kish!

Common Application “Common App”

Complete 1 application to apply to MANY 4-year colleges and universities across the U.S.!

→ 26 IL colleges currently accept the Common App incl.: Augustana, Benedictine, Bradley, Columbia, DePaul, Northwestern, and Western.

**Some students prefer the individual college/university applications because they are more user-friendly and faster to complete (less required)...*

Commonapp.org



College Applications - 4 Year Universities/Colleges

- **Backward design:** Read entire application and begin with what you cannot do on your own (ex. Letter of Rec., Transcript, Official Test Scores)
 - **Letter of rec** - Teachers have until the deadline to submit - not held against you if they are late
 - **Transcript** - You and a parent need to sign off AND pay \$1 to Student Services (gets you 5 transcripts)
 - FIND OUT IF YOUR CURRENT COURSES ARE NEEDED...tell Ms. Miranda!
 - **Official Test Scores** - Need to request through SAT/ACT, takes a few weeks!



College Applications - 4 Year Universities/Colleges CONTINUED...


- **Essays:** personal statements, academic statements...
 - Average **word requirement:** 250-500 words (1 pg)
 - Pay attention to what application says!
 - **Tips** to keep in mind when writing
 - Be yourself- what has shaped you?
 - Show diversity- what makes you stand out?
 - Do research and tailor each essay accordingly
 - Be concise and follow directions
 - Go beyond your test scores, GPA
 - Tell a story- don't bore the admissions officer!
 - Put in **Google doc** and share with someone

College Applications - 4 Year Universities/Colleges CONTINUED...

- Follow directions
- Do not fear the “additional information” section
- Have someone proofread before you submit
- Social Media - clean it up!

****Early application deadline for most state colleges and universities is **Nov. 1******





USUAL Deadlines for Popular Colleges and Universities

- University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign (U of I)- Dec. 1
- University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)- Jan. 15
- Illinois State University (ISU)- Mar. 1
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU-C)- May 1
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIU-E)- May 1
- Western Illinois University (WIU)- May 15
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville (UW-Platteville)- July 1
- Northern Illinois University (NIU)- Aug. 1
- Eastern Illinois University (EIU)- Aug. 15
- Kishwaukee College- some time in August
- Rock Valley College- some time in August

MOST COLLEGES ARE ALREADY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS AS OF **SEPTEMBER 1!**

National College Decision Date





Keys for a Successful College Application Process



- Stay organized!
 - Use a planner (electronic or hardcopy) for:
 - Deadlines (applications, scholarships, etc.)
 - Placement testing
 - College tours/orientations
 - Visual for WHEN you need to ask for items
 - Give people 2-3 weeks for letters of rec
 - Checklists- what do I need to accomplish?
 - Google Drive- storage and collaboration
 - [Template](#)



Keys for a Successful College Application Process



- **Involve someone!**
 - Parent, guardian, counselor, teacher, coach, friend, college rep...
 - Can provide feedback and support
- **Stay accountable!**
 - Application + materials being submitted on time is on YOU
- **Practice self-reflection!**
 - Not an easy process- don't lose sight of why you started