



THE GREEN PAGES

News from Christ School's College Guidance Office

Spring 2015

Reflections from Conrad Ma '15 on the Morehead-Cain Experience

From a pool of just over 2000 candidates to a final group of approximately 60, Christ School is particularly pleased that Conrad Ma has been selected as a Morehead-Cain Scholar at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. The Morehead-Cain Scholarship is one of the most highly selective programs in the country with only three percent of candidates gaining admission to the program each year. Conrad discusses, in his own words, his experience....

How did you learn about the Morehead-Cain?

I learned about the Morehead-Cain Scholarship from Mr. Blackard at the start of my senior year.

What aspects of the Morehead-Cain interest you the most?

I love the flexibility of the four "Enrichment" summers which help the candidates to fully explore their interests. It's a process of self-discovery which includes abundant resources. I appreciate how the Foundation reaches out to connect scholars in a very focused way with their vast network of contacts who may further enrich the scholar's learning experience.

How did you prepare for the final stage of the Morehead-Cain scholarship competition and what did you learn about yourself in the process?

With the help of other Christ School personnel, as well as the assistance of Dr. Plyler, a parent of a Christ School alumnus, and former Morehead-Cain recipient Chambers Loomis '13, I was fortunate to advance. I went through a set of two mock interviews for both the regional and final round of the scholarship selection. As Dr. Plyler said, "It's a process of humbly selling oneself."

The interviewers were most interested in getting to know me. They asked a wide range of questions including topics related to current events, my background story, and what academic area(s) interested me the most. The leadership pillar seemed to be a huge part of the selection process (not to downplay the importance of the other three pillars) and the interview committee was eager to see how I was/am able to motivate and lead a crowd.

Discuss your impressions of the final round competition as it relates to the people involved and the events that were planned for you and the finalists.

All of the events held during Finalist Weekend were well-coordinated and arranged in a way to help the finalists have great conversations with fascinating people from all over the world. I met with current Morehead-Cain scholars, listened to inspirational speakers, and stayed at The Carolina Inn, a first class hotel, where I enjoyed outstanding meals and a variety of activities. From the time I arrived until I left, the Morehead-Cain organization was most hospitable and accommodating. Every candidate was passionate about what he/she does; they ALL want to make a difference.

What are you most excited about doing as a Morehead Cain recipient and student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill?

The Morehead-Cain application process alone, is a life-changing experience. I am most excited about the opportunity to pursue

and receive an education at one of the top universities in the United States and to have the opportunity to partake in the Foundation's enriching summer program.

The Morehead-Cain network will offer me many options to further develop my goals and interests. I am looking forward to connecting with people on and off campus, finding internships, traveling to different places, and developing an even larger world view.

May students interested in learning more about the Morehead-Cain contact you if they have any questions? If so, how?

Absolutely! The experience has been overwhelming and inspiring. As Chambers assisted me, I would also love to help the "next generation" of Christ School students succeed with the Morehead-Cain competition.





Sam James: *On and Off Stage at Bates College*

What would you have done differently with regard to the college search and application process?

You hear this a lot, but I feel the only thing I wish I could correct in my approach to the college application process would be to start earlier. I started on everything early because I applied to two schools early admission, but I was still stressed halfway through the year when all the other applications were due. Make a schedule and plan months in advance.

What advice might you offer high school seniors about their future collegiate experience?

Attending Christ School prepared me extremely well for college, but college is exceptionally different from high school. At Christ School, there is a great deal of structure to the school day. In college, you are in class sometimes just two hours in the course of the day. The rest of the time is yours to study and participate in college life. I'd advise a rising college freshman to plan the whole semester as early and as precisely as possible, occasionally down to each hour in the day. I would also recommend getting involved early. There are hundreds of clubs and teams to join. Use these opportunities for enjoyment and edification, but also to make friends. My closest friends at college are not only from the halls I've lived on and my classes, but they're also from my activities outside of class. In addition to your classmates, get to know your professors. At a small liberal arts college such as Bates it is inevitable that you will form a relationship with each of your professors, but I've heard at much larger schools it can sometimes be more difficult. Knowing your professors and being able to approach them is one of the best things you can do for yourself as a college student.

How is college similar/different from Christ School?

College is vastly different from high school in terms of structure. Simply put, you have a lot of free time to study. At Christ School, study time and academics are a part of the daily routine by virtue of Study Hall. In college you have the privilege of creating your own time for studying (and you have a lot of it). Bates College is quite similar to Christ School, however, due to its size. My school is very small, and, like CS, there is nowhere to hide. The way I developed deep relationships with my teachers at Christ School served



Sam James hams is up in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" at Christ School.

as a pretty nice example for how to foster both professional relationships and friendships with not just one but all of my professors. Professors can seem scary, but like CS teachers, are very approachable and enthusiastic about their subjects and their students' success. Also, at Bates, I remember making friends on my freshman hall felt very natural and was reminiscent of the bonds within the Houses at Christ School. There was an upperclassman on the hall just like the prefects at Christ School who was actively supportive of every freshman on the hall and made everyone feel at home. Even with all the warm welcoming faces here at Bates, I imagine my transition to college dorm life would have felt a little less smooth without my experience at Christ School.

Looking back on your Christ School experience, what will you remember most and in what ways did you grow as an actor?

I think about Christ School all the time, because as a teenager, that's where I became a student and a person with a specific, intentional identity. I remember dorm life a lot and late hours studying and goofing off with the guys on the hall. I often think about all my teachers, and sometimes I'll sit in class during a lecture here and think, Hey! We studied this at Christ School! I also think of the friends I made through theater at Christ School. I especially remember rehearsals with Mrs. Dillon and learning so much from her about telling stories, developing characters, and listening to everybody on stage and in the audience. I left Christ School a completely different actor than when I entered. I remember my first show "The Fantasticks" and thinking how talented everyone was and thinking, well, if I make people laugh I've done my job. A few musicals and a couple of plays later and I had learned the importance of working on a script, a capacity for emotion and empathy for a character, and how to really listen to other performers and the audience. I also remember a lot of laughs with friends behind the scenes and how fun it was to meet actors from other schools around Asheville.

“College is rewarding and fun and exciting, but cherish your time as a Greenie because, in my experience, much of what you learn at Christ School will serve you well in college and make your transition to freshman year really smooth.”

Discuss your collegiate theater experience so far. What words of wisdom might you have for future Christ School students who wish to participate at the college/university level?

I am passionate about theater and acting, I got involved right away my freshman year. I was cast in a play called "Tape" directed by an upperclassman. Because the school is small, everyone knows everyone in the theater community, and I developed really close friendships with so many other actors, and I got to know the theater department professors very well. After that show I was cast in the main stage show "Little Egypt" directed by one of my professors during Bates's five-week semester in May. Both shows were produced by the theater department, but I am also involved in the Robinson Players student-run theater organization on campus. Through the club, I was recently cast in a show called "The Aliens" which will go up in April. I also am currently a pianist for the club's musical "Edges" which will be produced in March. Then, during the short term in May, I will direct Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" on the campus's outdoor amphitheater. There are so many ways to get involved and I really benefitted by getting involved early.

What are your plans for the future after college?

After college I hope to continue to act and work in the theater in any capacity. I am interested in attending a graduate acting program and working in theaters across the country, or maybe teaching English or directing theater somewhere down the road.

What aspects of Christ School prepared you well for your time college?

The rigorous courses and the teachers prepared me well for my time here at Bates. Also, I am fortunate to be so involved here in the theater department, and I think my love of acting grew exponentially on stage in Pingree.

May students contact you if they have questions? If so, how?

If anyone has any questions about theater at a small college, or specific questions about Bates, I would love to be of help. You can email me at sjames2@bates.edu.

Top 5 Financial Aid Tips to Know

(according to Laura Misner,
Western North Carolina's Regional
Representative with College Foundation
of North Carolina)



- 1. Students need to take an active role in THEIR financial aid process. Parents cannot attend college for their child and colleges are not allowed (by law) to contact parents.**
- 2. If needed, federal student loans can strongly “encourage” students to take an active part and once in repayment, helps build credit. Even if parents help repay student loans, they have lower interest rates so take more of these rather than higher interest parent loans.**
- 3. File taxes as early as possible and always meet colleges’ financial aid/priority filing deadlines to maximize college’s funds.**
- 4. Make searching for scholarships almost a part time job.**
- 5. Research other funding options for colleges – payment plans, home equity loans, grandparent support, 529 Savings Program.**



“The test will assess a student’s ability to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence from a wide variety of sources including literature, literary non-fiction, the humanities, science, history, social studies, and topics about work and careers.”

Juniors Young Perry and Christian Nichols prepare for the test.

Testing:

What the heck is the SAT Doing with all These New Changes?

The key change that SAT test-makers are implementing is to remodel their test design to reflect a wider spectrum of topics and will require students to be able to identify evidence within the test material that supports their answer choices. In effect, these changes will make the SAT more like the ACT. Below is the breakdown of major changes per section of the SAT. The differences between tests are noted after each point. There will not be a science section, as there is on the ACT and the scoring will go back to a 1600-point composite instead of the current 2400. Students will also no longer be penalized for guessing.

MATH

These questions are going to be tougher. The math section is going to focus on linear equations and systems of equations, complex equations and functions, and ratios, percentages and proportional reasoning to solve problems in science, social science, and career contexts. In some problems, students will be presented with a scenario, and then asked several questions about it. This will make students have to know the math much better than they used to, rather than relying

on guessing and speed techniques. The geometry portion of the test is shrinking from 44% to 10% of the total question pot. Therefore, the SAT will actually have less geometry on its concept board than the ACT. The SAT will, however, have slightly more algebra, and quite a bit more trigonometry. Twenty percent of the test will still include student produced responses, and there will be one of the two math sections that does not allow calculator use.

READING

The biggest difference in the reading sections between the old SAT and ACT is now gone! Students will no longer have to do sentence completion with a bunch of barely used vocabulary words. Instead, they will need to define easier words in the context of a passage. The test will assess a student’s ability to interpret, synthesize and use evidence from a wide variety of sources including literature, literary non-fiction, the humanities, science, history, social studies and on topics about work and careers. Students will also need to interpret a scientific passage, which includes graphs and/or charts. This passage will be very similar to those found

on ACT science section passages. Every exam will have a passage containing an excerpt from either one of the nation’s “Founding Documents” or a text from the “Ongoing Great Global Conversation about freedom, justice and human dignity.” Finally, students will need to be able to discern how evidence is used to support a given author’s argument in a passage. There will be a minimum of one question per passage that requires students to choose a quotation from the text that supports the answer they have chosen to the previous question. Not only will they need to find out what the argument is, but how it is presented.

WRITING

The writing section will greatly resemble that of the ACT in that students will have to find grammatical and fluency errors inside the context of an actual reading passage. Students will be asked to improve the expression of ideas by assessing rhetorical effectiveness, organization and topic development as well as assessing proper grammatical and mechanical structures. Also, this section will, again, test graph-reading skills like those surveyed on the ACT science test.



Mr. Chisholm works with Harris Smoots '16 during Test Prep Class.

ESSAY

This section of the test is very different. Not only has the time increase from 25 to 50 minutes but the essay prompts will make students be much more analytical than those of previous tests. A good, creative editorialized essay will no longer receive a high score. Instead, scores will be based on strength of analysis and writing coherence. Students will have to use evidence and solid logic to analyze a provided source and explain how the author defends his/her stance on an issue. While the specific source will change from administration to administration, the essay prompt will remain consistent. The essay is technically optional now, but all students will eventually need to take it once.

WHAT IS CHRIST SCHOOL DOING ABOUT THE CHANGES?

As additional information comes out, and as test preparation materials are developed, Christ School Test Prep teachers, Dale Sparacino (about 20 years experience with test preparation help) and Matt Chisholm, will familiarize themselves with these resources as they are released. Over the course of the summer, the school's Test Preparation Class will be revised to incorporate the new changes prior to the spring test change.

WHAT ABOUT THE PSAT?

The PSAT will be redesigned to be in line with the changes for the SAT, and will be broken down to have a PSAT for juniors, one for 10th grade, and one for 8th/9th graders. PSAT and PSAT 8th/9th will start October, 2015; PSAT 10th grade will start in spring 2016. The PSAT will include evidence-based reading and writing through a Reading Test and a Writing and Language Test, as well as a Math Test. As in the past, the PSAT will not have an essay component. As with the redesigned SAT, the PSAT will emphasize reasoning and the skills thought to be necessary for college and career readiness and success. Scoring will follow the pattern of the redesigned SAT with shifts that will take into account the difference of scope. Scores for the PSAT 8/9 will range from 120-720 for each the Math and the Evidence-based Reading and Writing sections. Scoring for the PSAT and PSAT 10 will follow the same scoring as the redesigned SAT.

For answers to questions about the new SAT or Christ School test preparation, contact:

Dale Sparacino
dsparacino@christschool.org

Matt Chisholm
mchisholm@christschool.org



Upcoming Spring Events

April 14

PLAN Test for Sophomores

April 15

Advanced Placement Pre-Registration for ALL AP STUDENTS (8:45AM in Media Center)

April 27

Transition to College Workshop for Seniors

April 24-26

Mother/Son Weekend
Senior Roundtable with Mothers

May 1-3

Alumni Weekend

May 2

SAT I or II

May 4 – 15

Advanced Placement Exams for ALL AP STUDENTS

May 8

June SAT and June ACT regular registration deadlines

May 16

Awards Ceremony

College Guidance Contact Information

Kirk Blackard, Director,
828-684-6232 ext. 110
kblackard@christschool.org

Meg Conner, College Counselor for 9th and 10th Grades, ext. 229
mconner@christschool.org

Coco Parham, Testing Coordinator and Administrative Assistant, ext. 167
cparham@christschool.org
(Mon-Thurs, 8:00am-3:00pm)

Jennifer Bird, Registrar, ext. 106
jbird@christschool.org

Summer Opportunities to Consider

It's very easy to spend your summer days by the pool or on the couch catching up on your latest Netflix binge-watching craze, but summer can be a great time to gain some new experiences. Colleges and universities all over the country offer some type of enrichment opportunities for high school students so make sure to do some research. You might be surprised at just how much is out there! Summer experiences are not only great for you personally, but they can really help your resume stand out in a sea of college applications. Below is a sampling of some programs to give you an idea of what all is out there.

Duke University offers a variety of summer programs for students in grades 9-12 through their Summer College and Summer Academy. This includes courses where students can earn college credit or have personal enrichment experiences. For more information please contact Teresa Cerrato Amador at teresa.cerrato.amador@duke.edu or email Dr. Nicki Charles at nicki.charles@duke.edu.

Wake Forest University invites rising juniors and seniors to come live on Wake Forest's beautiful Reynolda Campus and examine some of the world's most pressing challenges through interdisciplinary lenses as part of their LENS program. Join a diverse cohort of students eager to engage in a program of study based on global challenges. For more information, visit <http://lens.wfu.edu/>.

If our nation's capital is where you would like to spend your summer, check out George Washington University's summer programs. Students can take both credit and non-credit courses in everything from government to medicine to English. For more information, visit <http://precollege.gwu.edu/about>.

If you are itching to get out of your town and see the world, there are several study abroad options for high school students. CIEE offers a plethora of travel and learning opportunities for students to everywhere from China to Morocco to Italy. For more information and to see a full list of all locations, visit <http://www.ciee.org/high-school-summer-abroad/>.

Summer doesn't have to be all about academics and college credit. There are many leadership opportunities that can also help you gain valuable skills. Check out the Shelton Leadership Challenge at NC State University. The Shelton Challenge is a six-day residential experience to help students expand their knowledge and skills of what it takes to be a leader. For more information, visit <http://sheltonleadership.ncsu.edu/youth-shelton-challenge/>.





Senior Reflections: *Advice to Underclassmen on the College Search and Application Process*



Conner Allison

- Get your essays done early.
- Complete all application forms as soon as possible.
- Keep a schedule and make deadlines for yourself separate of application deadlines.



Jack Fleming

- Visit schools of interest.
- Scout the school's website.
- Look at Youtube videos of schools and make sure schools have all that you want.
- Do all application essay work early. Do them over the summer and have Mr. Blackard review.



Matt Betts

- As a junior, go ahead and start cutting away schools you don't think are of interest to you, but not before you research them.



Liam Pulsifer

- If you don't believe what you're writing in an essay, write about something different. If you don't feel strongly about what you're writing, it won't be believable.
- Make sure you work regularly.
- If a college does not feel right, trust your gut and don't apply. It's not worth the extra time and effort if you don't feel connected to a place.



Alex Dunn

- Apply to different size and types of schools.
- Have a backup that you are positive you can get into.
- Chyten and Mrs. Sparacino were both extremely helpful for me in improving my ACT scores.



Jack Purvis

- Don't over apply to colleges. Just pick your top five or six and make sure you have ones in EACH of the three categories – Good Bet, Middle of the Road, and Reach.
- Visit the schools while people are on campus and make sure to talk with students if the opportunity arises.