

## Fall Break College Tour 2013 Tennessee and Georgia Schools

# See?

College shopping with your friends is a great way to get a feel for a number of schools. This Fall Break College Tour visited: University of Tennessee, Rhodes College, Vanderbilt University, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia, Belmont University and Sewanee, University of the South.



Students take a breather in front of the University of the South's Admission Office.



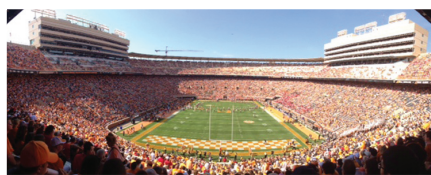
A southern tour would not be complete without fried chicken!



A side trip to the Civil Rights Museum and Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.



Checking in with Cornelius Vanderbilt.



UGA v. UT Football – A Game to remember!



Hamming it up on the steps of Belmont University.

## Upcoming Events

### Wednesday, October 16

PSAT for ALL Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors

Essay and Application Blitz for Seniors

### October 16 – November 17

Chyten Test Prep for registered Juniors

### October 31 & November 1

Naviance Workshops for Parents

Conferences with College Guidance Counselors (*Available for all students and parents; contact Jennifer Bird for more information.*)

### Saturday, November 2

SAT Test Date

### Tuesday, November 12

PLAN for Sophomores

### Early December

PSAT/PLAN scores released; review with College Counselor

### Tuesday, January 7, 2014

Financial Aid/Scholarship Workshop for Parents (Pingree Theater)

### January 11 & 12

SAT Prep for Juniors not enrolled in Chyten

### January 18 & 19

ACT Prep for Juniors not enrolled in Chyten

### Fall/Winter Weekends

Tours of local colleges and universities for Juniors (*See College Guidance bulletin board for details*)

## College Guidance Contact Information

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

Emily Pulsifer, College Counselor for 9th and 10th Grades, ext. 229  
epulsifer@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



# THE GREEN PAGES

News from Christ School's College Guidance Office

Fall 2013

## College Focus Panel 2013



Trevor Murrah '16 asks a question of the panel.

In September, representatives from five selective colleges and universities visited Christ School to share their wisdom with freshmen, sophomores and new juniors. Emily Pulsifer moderated the discussion, drawing talking points from student comments during an informal "Fact or Fiction" game. The group covered relevant topics such as admission procedures and policies, standardized tests, the role of extracurriculars and service in admission decisions, and college visits. When asked for their final nuggets of advice, this is what the panelists said:

### Audrey Bodell (Clemson University)

*If your dream school is out of reach, consider attending another institution and transferring.*

*Visits, visit, visit! You won't know how a school really feels until you spend time on campus.*

### Sara Garcia (Davidson College)

*Talk with alumni; hear what they say about their experiences and assess their success after college.*

*Pay attention to the people who attend certain schools; are they people you admire and with whom you'd want to spend four years?*

### Patty Baum (UNC, Chapel Hill)

*Colleges like "pointy people," individuals who follow their passions in one or two areas.*

*In this midst of the stress and uncertainty of the college admissions process, remember to laugh; also remember that college admissions personnel are generous people who want what's best for YOU.*

### Nancy York (Sewanee, University of the South)

*Do your research: read books, check websites and visit the schools on your list.*

*Get to know your admission counselor; you'll find his or her contact information on college websites.*

### Michael Cabe (University of Georgia)

*Live the life you want to write about; get out and do things you love to do.*

*Don't live a life you must explain away; make good choices.*



# On the Road: Touring Colleges

**W**ith a computer screen or guidebook in front of you, many colleges look the same. They're the same size, they nest in the same region of the country, and one school's list of majors mirrors those of 40 others. Pictures on websites and brochures show diverse groups of students strolling along leafy walkways or leaning over an experiment in a state-of-the-art laboratory. In any publication, you're bound to find upbeat quotes from ambitious students who are accomplishing great things. Does any of this sound familiar?

The truth is, what makes a college unique can be difficult to convey through lists or photographs. How, for example, do students react to one another when they pass on those leafy walkways? What role do professors play when their students are engaged in laboratory experiments? And those ambitious students, where do they go when they have a few minutes to unwind (if they have them)? The only way to find answers to these vital questions is to spend time on each school's campus.

## Planning a Visit

### Before:

- Do research. You may know a great deal about a school, but it doesn't hurt to spend time confirming that it has the programs and features that are important to you. Use Naviance, College Board, College InSight and Zinch.com to learn more about schools.
- Check schedules. Most colleges offer information sessions and daily tours with current students.
- Schedule an interview (if offered). Mr. Blackard can arrange a practice interview if you lack experience.
- Interested in a specific academic, musical or athletic program? Contact the department chair or coach to let them know when you plan to tour.
- If you've scheduled a meeting with a coach or professor, bring a copy of your resume.
- Wear school dress. If you make an impression, you want it to be for your sincerity and intelligence, not your ratty jeans. Shoes? Make sure they're comfortable.

### On Campus:

- Complete an information card. Colleges like to know you've visited.
- Listen, ask questions and take notes.
- Walk around on your own. Formal tours are very helpful but they're choreographed. Take time to step off the beaten path; talk to students who have not been coached by admissions; eat a meal in a school cafeteria or grill.

### After:

- Transfer your notes to your Naviance Journal; spend time evaluating what you saw and heard.
- Send thank you emails to your tour guide, the admissions personnel who led your information session, and any other individuals who took time to talk with you.



# Alumni Profile – Chambers Loomis, Class of 2013

Chambers Loomis graduated last May after a spectacular five years at Christ School. In addition to being his class's valedictorian and a National Merit Scholar, he founded Christ School's musical outreach club, Notes from the Soul, and served as the Honor Council Chair during his senior year. Chambers was accepted by numerous colleges and universities before choosing Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



## What advice might you offer underclassmen about the college search process? About the application process?

Begin early! Don't just talk about where you want to go to college. Determine exactly what you need to do to be a successful applicant at that college, and take the initiative yourself. Remember that these are your applications, and the College Guidance Office is there to do just that—guide.

## What surprised you about the college search and application process?

The process itself is a lot simpler than I expected. Applying to most schools entails pairing a common set of formwork with a single essay that can often be reused.

## If you had a “do over” with the college search and application process, what might you change?

I would have begun working on my essays sooner. I mistakenly believed that I would somehow be better prepared to write my essays in the fall of my senior year, when I would begin filling out applications. The reality is that your ability to contextualize your application with essays will not magically change with the onset of your senior year. Summer is an opportune time to begin drafting essays.

## How did you find time to balance all of your commitments, visit colleges and work on college applications?

I made sure to always plan ahead. I used study halls, school breaks, and free nights to work on applications. I did not relegate my college applications to Mr. Blackard's office. Embarrassingly, I even conceived essay themes in the shower. I visited colleges over a week during my junior summer, and I went on post-acceptance visits in April.

## In what ways do you think your Christ School educational experience helped you stand out in the application process?

Teacher-student relationships are special at Christ School, and this unique dynamic was likely reflected in my teacher recommendations. Hands-on experiments in science classes peppered many of my responses to specific prompts. Additionally, Christ School allowed me to take my interest in classical piano and run with it from the beginning. I was never forced into a mold. Furthermore, when I expressed interest, Mr. Mouer even created an A.P. Music Theory course to further my musical pursuits.

## In what way(s) did your college tours help you in making your final college decision?

Presentations by each school's Office of Admission helped me understand the identity of each school and edit my list.

## You received offers from a number of outstanding schools, among them, the Ivies; when and how did you reach the decision that Harvard was where you most wanted to be?

When I made my final visit to Harvard, I sensed that gut-level vitality that I had been searching for on a college campus, and I loved the city of Boston. Also, given that I did not know exactly what I wanted to study, Harvard's collective strength across a variety of fields made it particularly attractive.

## You received the Morehead-Cain and B. N. Duke scholarships. How did you prepare? What was involved?

Each scholarship entailed written applications and numerous interview rounds. Given that a large majority of the applicants shared identical stats and took part in similar extracurricular

activities, these interviews were used to dig below the surface and distinguish between candidates. For interviews, the best advice I can give is to answer each question not with a stock answer that it seems the interviewer would want to hear, but rather with things that will authentically convey who you are and contextualize your interests, even if those things might surprise the interviewer. For the written application, the best advice I can give is to never try to force fit one's application to meet a given scholarship's stated criteria. Be oneself. One of the Morehead-Cain's criteria is physical vigor. I have never played a sport in my life. Instead of “gaming it” and joining a sports team before I applied for the scholarship, I simply submitted my outdoor experience in the Boy Scouts and crossed my fingers that it would count.

## What aspects of Christ School will you miss? What aspects of Harvard or collegiate life do you most look forward to experiencing?

I will miss Christ School's small classes and intimate relationships with teachers. I look forward to experiencing the diversity of thought and background prevalent at Harvard. It is supposed to be a microcosm of the entire world. I also look forward to being taught by some of the world's greatest minds and having Boston as an extended campus.



*State Champion Chambers Loomis performs with the Charlotte Symphony*