

## Recommendation Letter Protocol

Most private universities require letters of recommendation; some public universities accept them, but do not require them; and some public universities do **not** want them at all (U.W.). The letter of recommendation is meant to tell more about you as an individual rather than reiterate your resume. For the most part, colleges will be looking for letters from those who know you, and your academic work, well.

If you are applying using the Common App, see guidelines for its completion. A counselor and at least one teacher recommendation will be required.

Research the colleges you are planning to apply to, to check if they require letters of recommendation. If a school does not require letters, *do not send them*.

### The Details

#### Who:

- Choose a teacher(s) that you had/have during your Junior or Senior year
- If you are applying to a school with a specific major, then choose a teacher in this field or a very related field (math, science, art, music etc)
- If you are applying to a liberal arts college, ask a teacher(s) from the core subject departments (English, Social Studies etc)
- Make sure one of your teachers writes about your academic ability/achievement and can give specific examples that help you stand out
- Your counselor will address you as a “whole person”, including academics, extracurricular activities, involvement and you as an individual. See below for more specifics

#### When:

- Ask your teachers and counselor for recommendation letters **at least 3 weeks prior to the date the letters are due**. Keep in mind that school staff do not work over holiday and vacation time.
- The more time you give, the better the letter can be. If staff are rushed by upcoming deadlines, letters may not be as thorough.

#### How:

- Your counselor requires that a detailed questionnaire be completed. This document is on the website and has been shared with students through Google Docs.
- Please **type** your answers out and either print a hard copy or share through Google Docs with all staff who are writing letters for you.

**Recognition:**

\*\*Remember that it takes a lot of time and effort to write recommendation letters. Staff are more than happy to support students this way, but *please do remember to say thank you*. A warm in-person thank you, a card or small token of your thanks goes a long way!

**The Common Application**

Most private schools now use The Common Application.

- The Common App is entirely electronic and is one application that is sent to all participating schools that the student is applying to.
- Requires a recommendation from two teachers *and* a counselor
- Students complete one major essay to use for all colleges
- Some colleges require an additional, supplemental short essay
- It is strongly recommended that students check the “yes” box, waiving their right to access. Please see your counselor with any questions/concerns.