



## Communicating with Colleges

You, the student, are in charge here. You, not your parents, are responsible for communications with the admissions offices, with MCDS, and even with the financial aid offices. This is an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility, initiative, independence, and competence.

Before you ask a question of the admissions office, be very sure that the answer is not somewhere on the college's website. Read carefully, and avoid the embarrassment (or worse) of someone deciding you are lazy or don't read well. However, once you have carefully read all the information on the website, ask for clarification if necessary; be specific about where you read it, and ask your question concisely and precisely.

Be careful not to mix up colleges that have similar names. For example, Cornell College is not the same as Cornell University. Arguably, a student aspiring to attend one who mistakenly applies to the other should be admitted to neither.

Be professional in all your e-mails. Spell correctly. Don't use first names, colloquial language or abbreviations, or emoticons. Sign your name exactly as it appears on all your application materials. If the college has assigned you an applicant number, include it.

If your e-mail address is even slightly unprofessional, set up a new address using your name, and use only that one for college-related correspondence. Be sure to check it regularly (that means daily, starting now; Mrs. Schweber will use it for college-related correspondence).

Make sure your cell phone has a professional-sounding greeting.

Be cautious in your use of social networking sites. If you would not want the admissions director of your first-choice college, or your great-grandmother, to see it, then get rid of it. It is not unheard of for admissions officers to gain access to what you consider private.

Address admissions representatives and alumni interviewers as Mr./Ms./ Dr./Professor as appropriate, both when speaking to them and when writing an e-mail or letter. They may be just a few years older than you are, but this is not the time to be casual.

When addressing envelopes, write neatly or type. Position the address correctly.

Don't make excuses if you have missed a deadline. Politely ask if it is possible to submit your materials, even though it is late. You never know. But take responsibility rather than blaming the Common Application website, other individuals, or your travel plans.

**Be on time. Meet deadlines early. And always be polite and professional.**