



Vassar College
Alumnae/i Admission
Program

Volunteer
Handbook

2019-2020

Welcome to the Alumnae/i Admission Program!

On behalf of the Vassar College Office of Admission, we want to thank you for volunteering for the Alumnae/i Admission Program. We hope you are excited to work with the many high school students who are interested in Vassar. As an alumnae/i admission volunteer, your help is invaluable to Vassar's Office of Admission. We appreciate all of the time and hard work you put into the program.

Each year, about 1600 volunteers provide vital support to the Office of Admission through various activities, including conducting prospective-student interviews, attending college fairs, congratulating admitted students, attending receptions for admitted and matriculating students, and much more. Each activity helps the Office of Admission increase the number of students we reach and help us personalize the college admission process.

We realize that every volunteer has a different schedule, varying commitments, and different interests. There are many activities that are part of the AAP, and we hope you find one (or many) that interest you.

If you have any questions or need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to help and to support your efforts.

Thank you again for your commitment to the AAP, and we look forward to working with you.

Michelle Harvey '14
Coordinator of the
Alumnae/i Admission
Program

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Program Assistant

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Purpose of the Alumnae/i Admission Program

Alumnae/i Admission Program (AAP) volunteers help the Office of Admission increase the visibility of Vassar in their local community. The overall goals of the program are to:

- Increase the number of qualified students who know about Vassar.
- Encourage students who are offered admission to choose Vassar.
- Create a wider Vassar presence across the country and around the world.

These goals are accomplished through the following program activities:

- Connecting with students who have requested to be put in touch with Vassar alumnae/i.
- Representing Vassar at local college fairs.
- Congratulating admitted and enrolled students by phone or e-mail.
- Working with other local volunteers on receptions for admitted and enrolling students.
- Conversing with prospective students- particularly through one-on-one conversations or interviews. These conversations:
 - Offer a unique perspective for prospective students that only Vassar alumnae/i can provide: a first-hand account of what people do with their Vassar degrees.
 - Extend the Office of Admission's geographical reach by corresponding with applicants who could not visit the college.
 - Provide a "personal touch" in the admission process, setting an example of the individualized attention that a student can expect at Vassar.
 - Help the Office of Admission obtain a greater depth of information about applicants to Vassar and how they might contribute to Vassar's vibrant community.
 - Create a positive image of Vassar for students, which has a community-relations benefit when applicants share their positive impressions of Vassar with their family and friends.

Alumnae/i Admission Program Activities

Interviewing Applicants to the First Year Class

AAP volunteers conduct interviews with applicants to the first year class. Your conversations can contribute significantly to applicants' knowledge of Vassar and make Vassar a more attractive college choice. The reports that volunteers submit after their conversations also add to our understanding of how an applicant might contribute to the Vassar community.

Representing Vassar at College Fairs

AAP volunteers represent Vassar at their local college fairs. Fairs heighten Vassar's visibility in the local area and offer a meaningful opportunity for personal interaction between enthusiastic Vassar alumnae/i and their local students.

Congratulating Admitted Applicants by Phone or E-mail

AAP volunteers help admitted students make informed college choices by sharing their enthusiasm, personal anecdotes, and factual information about Vassar. Naturally, volunteers will want to contact the students they interviewed. In addition, we encourage AAP volunteers to contact admitted students who did not receive alumnae/i interviews.

Attending Admitted Student Receptions (in select cities)

In the spring, AAP volunteers in a few larger cities are asked to attend Admitted Student Receptions. They welcome admitted students and their families to the Vassar community and encourage them to ultimately choose Vassar.

Vassar College Alumnae/i Admission Program Best Practices Agreement

To ensure the best experience possible for our prospective students and interviewers please take the time to read the best practices agreement. You will be asked to read and sign this agreement before logging into your AAP Portal.

1. The Role of the Alumnae/i Volunteer

- a. Alumnae/i volunteers will abide by the non-discrimination policies established by Vassar College.
- b. Alumnae/i volunteers will abide by the confidentiality policies of the AAP Program and Vassar College.
- c. Alumnae/i volunteers will abide by the best practices established by [NACAC](#) and the [NCAA](#).

2. Eligibility

- a. Conflicts of interest, real or perceived, will inform the volunteer's eligibility, as determined by Vassar College. Such conflicts may include:
 - i. Admissions officer or a college counselor
 - ii. Currently employee of Vassar College
 - iii. Immediate family member of current applicants to Vassar College
*Special note for volunteers with children applying to Vassar: We ask that you take a one year hiatus from volunteering during the application year for which your child is applying, but we will reinstate you as an active volunteer the following admission's cycle.
 - iv. Independent college counselor
 - v. For-profit college preparation consultant
- b. An alumnae/i volunteer may not represent more than one undergraduate institution in the same admissions cycle.

3. Expectations for Alumnae/i and Applicant Interactions

- a. Alumnae/i volunteers will strive to create a mutually respectful environment and interaction.
- b. Alumnae/i volunteers will treat all information provided by Vassar College or the applicant as confidential.
- c. Alumnae/i volunteers will not request that applicants provide specific materials (e.g., transcript, application, essays, resume, questionnaire) to their interviewer.
- d. Alumnae/i volunteers should not create any impressions or expectations, positive or negative, about the student's probability of admission.
- e. Alumnae/i volunteers will ensure that interactions occur in a safe, accessible and neutral location; at a time that is agreed upon by both parties; and that respects the volunteer's and the student's commitments to school, work, activities, and family obligations.
- f. Alumnae/i volunteers will not interview applicants with whom there is an existing personal, familial or professional connection.

- g. Alumnae/i volunteers will not initiate conversation that may make a candidate uncomfortable or that is overly personal, whether with regard to the candidate or the volunteer.
- h. Alumnae/i volunteers will use appropriate language.
- i. Alumnae/i volunteers will not use disparaging comparisons of secondary or post-secondary institutions.
- j. Alumnae/i volunteers will not ask the students where they are applying.
- k. Alumnae/i volunteers will keep contact information up-to-date through the AAP Portal.
- l. Alumnae/i volunteers will keep in contact with the local AAP Chair.
- m. Alumnae/i volunteers will keep up-to-date on Vassar.
- n. Alumnae/i volunteers will contact the Office of Admission if they do not know the answer to a question.
- o. Alumnae/i volunteers will follow through on commitments they have agreed upon.
- p. Alumnae/I volunteers will not conduct visits to high schools or community-based organizations on behalf of Vassar.
- q. Alumnae/i volunteers will let the admission office know of college fairs or community based organizations in their local area.

2019–2020 Checklist of AAP Activities

Ongoing

- Update your location and contact information through the AAP Portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum).
- Encourage other enthusiastic, committed, and knowledgeable alumnae/i to be AAP volunteers.
- At the request of the Office of Admission, volunteers are assigned by the AAP Chairs to represent Vassar at local college fairs.

September

- Updated AAP Manual and volunteer resources uploaded to AAP Portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) and updated volunteer lists will appear in Chair portals.

November

- November 15: Early Decision Round I application deadline for students.
- By November 16: AAP Chairs able to log into their AAP portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) to see interview requests from the Office of Admission (including Early Decision Round I applicants whose interview reports should be submitted by December 1) and assign interviews to volunteers.

December

- December 1: Last day to submit interview reports for Early Decision Round I applicants.
- Mid December: Congratulate admitted Early Decision Round I students.

January

- January 1: Early Decision Round II application deadline and Regular Decision deadline for students.
- By January 2nd: AAP Chairs log into their AAP portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) to see interview requests from the Office of Admission (including Early Decision Round II applicants whose interview reports should be submitted by January 20 and Regular Decision applicants) and assign interviews to volunteers.
- January 20: Last day to submit interview reports for Early Decision Round II applicants.

February

- Early February: Congratulate admitted Early Decision Round II students.
- Mid-February: AAP Chairs log into their AAP portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) to check on interview report submission status.
- February 17: Last day to submit interview reports for Regular Decision applicants.

March

- End of March: Regular Decision letters mailed to students and decisions available to students online.

April

- First week of April: Admitted students list from the Office of Admission will appear in Chair portal and AAP Chairs assign volunteers to congratulate students admitted to the freshman class.
- Mid-April: Admitted Student Receptions will be held in select cities.
- April 14 and 19: Campus Open House Days for admitted students.
- April 18 through 20: Focus on Vassar, a program for under-represented admitted students.

May

- May 1: Due date for students to submit deposits to the college they will be attending in the fall.
- Late-May: Final enrolling students list from the Office of Admission will appear in Chair portal. (If Vassar goes to the wait list, the enrolling students list might not show up until June.)

July

- Annual Volunteer Survey: Please use the survey to update address, contact information, and/or volunteer preference if they will be different for the upcoming year.

Interviewing Applicants

The Role of the Alumnae/i Interview

For applicants to Vassar, interviews are optional and are conducted by Vassar alumnae/i around the world. The interview is an ideal way for students to learn about Vassar from a different perspective, especially since you are encouraged to share what you have done with your Vassar degree. It is also a good way for the Office of Admission to gain a greater depth of understanding of how a student might contribute to Vassar's vibrant campus community as well as their level of interest in Vassar.

A note about interview reports: Your interview reports become part of the candidate's file. However, because interviewers do not (for confidentiality reasons) receive additional information on the candidate (e.g., academic transcripts, standardized test scores), the purpose of the interview is NOT to determine if the applicant is academically prepared for Vassar. It is also difficult, because of the extremely high volume of highly qualified applicants, for an interviewer to assess where any one student falls on the overall scale of candidates. Rather, it is to learn more about the student's interest in Vassar and answer their questions about the Vassar experience.

The value of the interview report submitted for the candidate's file is to provide the Office of Admission with a record that an interview was completed, as well as information that could help provide additional context about a student. Any information on an applicant's qualities that might raise a concern in the mind of the interviewer is helpful to the admission officer reading that file.

Here is what we tell students when they sign-up for an alumnae/i interview:

- Interview requests will not be processed until we have received their application.
- Requests will be prioritized based on application round (Early Decision, Regular Decision).
- If we cannot find an available interviewer, we will notify the student about one week before decisions are released.
- Not having an interview will not negatively influence our review of the application or the committee's decision.
- All interviews, whether in-person, at interviewing days, by phone, or by Skype/G-Chat are considered equal.
- If they must decline the interview, we ask that they respond to the interviewer explaining why they cannot attend.
- They do not have to bring a resume, high school transcript, or other application materials to the interview.
- They do not need to wear formal clothes, but they should wear something school appropriate.
- The interview is meant to be a conversation and not a stressful experience.
- The interviewer will submit a summary of the discussion to be added to the application.

STEP ONE: Setting up the Interview

From October to late February, your AAP Chair will assign students to you through the AAP Portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum). You will receive an automated email when an interview has been assigned to you which should prompt you to log into your AAP Portal for more information. Please send an email to your AAP Chair confirming that you accept the interview.

- Please contact the applicants assigned to you as soon as you view their contact information in your portal. **If possible, avoid using an email address from another college/university.** (This can confuse an applicant.)

- Select a few dates and times when you are available to conduct the interview. The conversation with the prospective student usually takes 45 minutes to an hour.
- We recommend a comfortable, convenient, public place (e.g., a cafe or a library) for a face-to-face interview. Please do NOT meet an applicant in your home.
- If a face-to-face interview is not feasible, you are welcome to do a Skype, Google Hangout, FaceTime, or phone interview if you wish.

STEP TWO: Conducting the Interview and Sample Questions

- Greet the applicant.
- Introduce yourself and offer some information such as your Vassar major, your job, if you attended graduate school, volunteer commitments, or other interests.
- Be warm and welcoming, and remember that the interview should be a positive part of the admission process.
- Put the applicant at ease by asking questions, then connecting their answers to opportunities at Vassar and your own experiences. Choose questions that are open-ended enough for the student to talk about an area of strong interest for him/her/them. Your questions should help you get to know the applicant and possibly ascertain the level of interest a student has in Vassar. Sample questions include:
 - “What is your favorite class/favorite teacher this year?”
 - “What is your favorite subject? Why?”
 - “Which extracurricular activities would you like to continue at Vassar? Are there new activities you would like to try?”
 - “If you were to take a year off before starting college, then what would you do?”
 - “What interests you about Vassar?”
- Keep in mind that this is a conversation! Share information about yourself, too, and let your passion for Vassar show in what you talk about.
- See what questions the applicant has for you. They may be about Vassar, your experience there, and/or what you do now.
- Offer to stay in touch. Give the applicant your name and contact information.

PLEASE AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

- Bad mouthing/speaking negatively about another college or university. Stating “College X sucks” or “College X’s campus culture is terrible” can be very off putting to an applicant.

Instead, if a student asks where else you applied, use it as an opportunity to explain all the ways Vassar was a great fit/experience for you.

Ex: “College X is a great school, but Vassar was a much better fit for me because...”

- Asking overly personal questions. A few examples:
 - “Where else are you applying?” (**This question may seem innocuous to you, but for many students it makes them uncomfortable because they are concerned their list will make them seem less interested in Vassar.**)
 - “What are your test scores/What’s your GPA/What’s your class rank? Do you have a copy of your transcript I can look at?”
 - “Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend/significant other?”
 - “Do you have a learning disability?”

A student may choose to disclose certain information to you, as is their prerogative. But it should be their decision to disclose certain information.

- Predicting admission decisions.
 - A student may give you a resume with their academic information (test scores, GPA, Class Rank, AP Courses, etc.) and ask you what their chances are for admission.
Please do NOT tell them if you think they have a good chance for admission or not.
 - If asked, remind the student you are an alum volunteer and are not part of the admission committee process. You can tell them admission to Vassar is highly selective and then encourage them to reach out to the Admission Office if they have questions about academic credentials.
- Wearing clothing that promotes another college or university.

STEP THREE: Writing the Interview Report

The primary goal of the interview is to encourage students to talk about themselves, and the purpose of the interview report is to relay what the student said to you back to Admissions. The interview reports provide the Office of Admission with a record that an interview was completed, as well as information that could help provide additional context about a student. From the report, we hope to gain insight on how the student might contribute positively to the Vassar community, but it is equally important to note any information on an applicant's qualities that might raise a concern to the admission officer reading that file. If a student reveals a big red flag (i.e. racist/derogatory jokes/language) it is important that the Admission Officer and Admission Committee are aware of this.

Though the interview alone will not provide all the necessary information required in determining where any one student falls on the overall scale of qualified candidates, the report you provide us will become part of the applicant's file to be reviewed in context with other application materials. However, because interviewers do not (for confidentiality reasons) receive additional information on the candidate (e.g., academic transcripts, standardized test scores), the purpose of the interview is NOT to determine if the applicant is academically prepared for Vassar. It is also difficult, because of the extremely high volume of highly qualified applicants, for an interviewer to assess where any one student falls on the overall scale of candidates. Rather, the purpose of the interview is to learn more about the student's interests and answer their questions about the Vassar experience.

On the interview report you will be asked to comment on the following:

- Academic Interests
- Extracurricular Interests
- Personal Qualities/Background
- Interest in Vassar
- For international students whose first language is not English, we will ask how you feel this student could contribute in a Vassar classroom based on their English proficiency.

The interview report will provide guiding questions to help you think about the ways in which the student has demonstrated particular academic and extracurricular interests, strong personal qualities or background, and why they are interested in Vassar. You do not have to answer each question, but be sure to address the overall topics with specific examples, and aim to include two to three sentences per topic. Do your best to provide evidence to support your observations and remain unbiased when describing the interaction.

If you are experiencing difficulties using the online form, then try using a different browser. If all else fails, you can email your interview report to: vcaap@vassar.edu.

Submitting Your Interview Report

Interview reports are how we track if an applicant has been 1) contacted by a volunteer, and 2) if an alum completed an interview with that student. Students who requested to meet with an alum, but do not have an interview report in the system, will be contacted by the Office of Admission explaining that we were unable to accommodate their request. Therefore, it is important that our system is up to date.

Submit your interview report using the online form. When you are in your AAP Portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum), click on the name of the applicant for whom you would like to submit a report. A pop up box will appear and at the bottom will be a link to “Submit Report.” After submitting a report you will receive a confirmation email that contains a copy of your responses. You can also view your report after submitting it by clicking on “View Report”. **You should still submit an Interview Report even if you cannot reach the applicant or if the applicant declines the interview.**

Representing Vassar at a College Fair

Introducing College Fairs

College fairs vary widely in who hosts them and who attends. Some are sponsored by schools and others by local organizations. Generally large groups of high school students (and sometimes middle school students) are invited to attend along with a large number of colleges. They often include a variety of institutions, public and private, small and big, from state universities to culinary schools. At most fairs, colleges are arranged alphabetically (Vassar is often placed between Vanderbilt and Villanova).

Vassar is invited to hundreds of college fairs every year. Some are attended by admission officers as part of their travel for the College, and we ask AAP volunteers to attend others. You will get an e-mail from our office or your AAP Chair if we need someone in your area to attend a college fair. They are often quite fun as you get to interact with prospective students and representatives of other colleges.

Preparing

1. Read the “Vassar at a Glance” provided in the box and bring it to the fair for reference.
2. Visit the following websites to be up to date with current Vassar information:
 - The Vassar website at www.vassar.edu
 - The Admission website at www.vassar.edu/admissions
 - The AAP Portal (www.apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) resources page
 - The AAVC “Hub” website at <http://alums.vassar.edu/>
3. Set up your college fair table (examples below) and look over the materials provided:
 - “Is that a fact”: general information brochure (majors are listed on the back on the left hand side)
 - “Can I afford it?": brochure about financial aid
 - Prospect cards to be completed by those who want to be added to our mailing list
 - Visitor's Guide (reference copy): Open your copy to the campus map. This is sent to all juniors in early June to help families plan summer college trips.
 - “What’s next?": our viewbook (reference copy): Open your copy to one of the pretty pictures. High school seniors on our mailing list will receive this in the mail.

Talking with Students and Families at the Fair

1. Greet students and ask what they are interested in studying in college. If a student asks about a particular major (listed on the back of “Is that a fact?” on the left hand side), provide a few facts about that major. If you don’t have a deep knowledge of a particular department, you can direct the student to check out the departmental website online. Your response might include information about small, seminar-style classes (average class size is 16), research opportunities, and internship possibilities.
2. Encourage students to take “Is that a fact?” and complete a prospect card to get on our mailing list. We prefer that students complete the card and leave it with you so we have a record that you met them at the fair.
3. Encourage students to visit the campus. This is the best way to determine if Vassar is a good match. Check www.vassar.edu/admissions for tour and information session times and for travel directions. Seniors can also participate in a class and/or overnight visit.
4. If you run out of cards, ask students to provide their names, complete mailing address, e-mail address, high school, and year of graduation on a piece of paper.
5. If a student asks a question that you cannot answer, check the Vassar at a Glance and the Frequently Asked Questions (on the next page). If you can't find the answer, encourage the student to contact the Vassar Office of Admission.

Guidelines

Your role as a volunteer representative is to provide a local contact and to help students learn more about Vassar. Please emphasize the following:

- Comprehensive and flexible open curriculum, no core curriculum, lots of freedom
- Attentive teaching faculty; small seminar-style classes; student-faculty ratio 8:1
- Research programs like URSI (Undergraduate Research Summer Institute), the Ford Scholars Program, and our internship (field work) opportunities
- Excellent preparation for medical, law, business, and graduate programs
- Diversity of our student body (generally from all 50 states and about 60 foreign countries)
- Supportive residential campus community with a wide range of extracurricular activities
- Ideal location 75 miles north of New York City in the Hudson Valley; many social, cultural, and recreational opportunities
- About 60% of students receive need-based financial aid. Please refer families to the “Can I afford it?” brochure.

Frequently Asked Questions at College Fairs (with suggested answers)

- 1. Do you have X major?** This question will come up a lot. Take a look at the back of the “Is that a fact?” brochure to see a list of majors. Here are some sample responses:
 - *General (for a major we have)* – Yes, we do have an X department. Like all departments at Vassar, you will have small classes and get to know your professors well. If you would like more information on the X department, you should check out the Vassar website at www.vassar.edu.
 - *General (something we don't have, like physical therapy, cooking, etc.)* – Unfortunately, Vassar does not have an X department. (If there is something closely related, you can mention that.)
 - *Engineering* – As an undergraduate institution, Vassar does not offer engineering. However, we do have a 3-2 program with Dartmouth through which students can earn both a Vassar degree and a Dartmouth engineering degree in 5 years. More information can be found on the Physics Department website.
 - *Pre-med or Nursing* – While Vassar does not have a formal pre-med major, we do have a strong Office of Pre-Health Advising which works with students who are thinking about going to medical school. Also, because of the flexibility of our curriculum, you can be pre-med and be, say, a History major quite easily. We also offer academic internships in the medical field.
 - *Business* – Vassar does not offer a business major, but we do have an Economics Department, which is very similar. This is the major chosen by most students who are interested in business or finance. We also offer academic internships in business in our local area and in New York City.
 - *Education* – Vassar has an Education Department. You can minor in Education and can graduate with a New York State Teaching Certification by completing a sequence of courses in addition to your major.
- 2. How strong is your X department?** – All of our departments are strong. We try to ensure that every department has great professors and strong courses, regardless of its size.
- 3. What do I need to get in? What are you looking for in a student?** – This is a harder question to answer. There is no one thing that a student needs. The most important factor in the admission process is the transcript. We want students to be taking challenging courses and doing well in them. You could also mention our SAT/ACT ranges and the other parts of the application. More can be found in the Vassar at a Glance section.
- 4. Where's Poughkeepsie (pa-wha?)** – Poughkeepsie is a small city located about an hour-and-a-half north of New York City in the Hudson Valley. It is easily accessible by train from New York City and its airports.
- 5. Do you have boys?** – We do! Vassar went co-ed about 50 years ago (in 1969). Currently the student body is about 41% male and 59% female.
- 6. Do you have a course catalogue?** – Our entire course catalogue is now online with up-to-date information. You can visit our website to see the list of classes being offered.

Other Things to Keep in Mind

Attendance at college fairs varies considerably. We measure success by the interest demonstrated by students who stop at the Vassar table. Just one terrific student can make a fair worthwhile.

If an emergency arises that prevents you from attending a program, please contact the sponsoring high school or organization and the Vassar Office of Admission before the event. If possible, drop off your materials for display at the fair.

After the College Fair

Please complete the College Fair Evaluation form through the AAP Portal (apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) or mail the enclosed paper evaluation form to the address below. Mail the completed prospect cards to:

Jodi Hammell
Vassar Office of Admission
124 Raymond Avenue, Box 10
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604
Fax: 845-437-7063
Email: vcaap@vassar.edu

The evaluation you provide of the college fair will tell us if this fair is worth doing in future years. We don't want to waste your time and our college fair budget if a fair is not worthwhile and is just a "grab and go" type fair. If you are not having productive conversations at a particular college fair please let us know!

You do not need to return extra brochures but please let us know how many "Facts" brochures were used.

"What should I do if I can no longer attend the college fair for which I volunteered?"

We understand how unpredictable life can be. However, in order to ensure the continued success of the AAP as a positive representation of Vassar College, it is important for our volunteers to make every effort to follow through on their commitments. In the case of college fairs, often Vassar has paid a non-refundable fee (as minimal as \$25 or as much as \$500) to participate in the fair.

If you are unable to attend, there are a few things you should do.

- First, if you know other alumnae/i volunteers in the area, please see if any of them can cover the fair for you. If you are able to find a replacement, please notify your area chair and the AAP leadership team via email.
- If you are unable to find your own replacement, please notify your area chair and the AAP leadership team so that we can try to find a replacement.

If you must miss a college fair, **PLEASE** notify your area chair and the AAP leadership! Do not miss a fair without telling anyone.

Congratulating Candidates

Congratulatory phone calls and e-mails from Alumnae/i Admission Program volunteers to admitted students (and welcoming those who decide to enroll) are important to the success of the Office of Admission's enrollment strategies. Our research indicates that your enthusiasm indicates a level of commitment to Vassar and a belief in its educational mission, which are very important to students and their families.

These calls are easier if you interviewed the applicant and have already established a rapport with him/her/them. In some cases, you may be asked to call an admitted student you do not know. To make all congratulatory contacts productive and comfortable, please use the format below to structure the conversation.

1. **Introduce yourself clearly:** "My name is _____. I am a Vassar alum from the Class of _____. I am calling to congratulate _____ on her/his admission to Vassar!"
2. **Ask about the student's senior year** and about commencement, a summer job, or summer activities.
3. **Ask if the student has visited the campus.** Students who visit our magnificent campus are more likely to enroll here than those who do not visit. We included an invitation to the April Open House Programs in the admit package, but we encourage admitted students to visit anytime in April.
4. Admitted students may request an **overnight visit** with a Vassar student and a **class visit**. There is information about the appropriate websites in their admit package.
5. You might **mention your major and then briefly describe your profession**. Some students may be concerned about declaring a major. Please stress our individualized pre-major advising, opportunities to take courses in many academic areas before declaring a major, Vassar's small classes, access to faculty, and research opportunities. Each academic department has a website. Students are encouraged to contact faculty members by e-mail.
6. Students who applied for financial aid should receive notice of financial aid awards about five days after they receive their admission notifications. **Encourage students who have questions or concerns about their financial aid packages to call the Office of Financial Aid** at 845-437-5320.

If the student is not available, you should talk with his or her parents. Congratulate them on their child's admission to Vassar and ask if they have any questions. We want parents to know about the Vassar community and to feel welcome. Leave your name and number in case the student or parents have additional questions.

Vassar at a Glance 2019–2020

Overview

- 2450 students
- 1000-acre campus
- 75 miles north of New York City

Extensive Academic Program

- Flexible curriculum
- See list of majors printed on the back of the Facts brochure.
- 51 majors and 40+ minors. Our five most popular majors are Economics, Political Science, Biology, Psychology, and English.
- Ability to create your own Independent Major if your area of interest is not covered by an existing department.
- Strong support for students interested in pre-health (pre-med, pre-dental, pre-vet), pre-law, pre-business, pre-architecture, and other graduate programs. Vassar graduates enjoy impressive admission rates to the top medical, law, business, and Masters and Ph.D. programs.
- Seminar-style/discussion-oriented classes:
 - Average class size is 16
 - 95% of classes have enrollments under 30.
 - Student-faculty ratio is 8:1
- Student/faculty collaborative “Intensives”: small project-based classes, research opportunities and independent study.
- Credit-bearing internships (Community Engaged Learning) offered by all academic departments. About 60% choose Field Work in areas ranging from medicine, law, and the arts to journalism, advertising, the media, social service, and education.
- Extensive Study Away (JYA) program. About 40-45% of our students choose to study away.

Information about Individual Departments and Majors

Encourage students to visit www.vassar.edu. Each department has a comprehensive website.

Excellent Location

- Students have access to the resources in Poughkeepsie and throughout the Hudson Valley.
- New York City offers academic, internship, and recreational opportunities; one hour and 40 minute train ride to Grand Central in Manhattan.

Diverse Student Body

- 33% domestic students of color.
- About 2/3 from public schools, 1/3 from private, parochial, independent and homeschooling programs.
- Students from 49 states, DC, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Marshall Islands, and 60 foreign countries.
- 66% of students receive need-based financial aid. 60% receive need-based Vassar scholarship.
- Student body is roughly 41% male and 59% female.

Strong Student Community

- Over 150 student-run organizations and clubs including political, volunteer, ethnic, and religious groups. Weekly newspaper and other student publications, drama and comedy clubs, FM radio station, a cappella groups, student bands, Outing Club, and debate team.
- 23 athletic teams at the NCAA Division III level: Men’s Baseball, M&W Basketball, M&W Cross Country, M&W Fencing, Women’s Field Hockey, Women’s Golf, M&W Lacrosse, M&W Soccer, M&W Squash, M&W Swimming and Diving, M&W Tennis, M&W Track, M&W Volleyball.
- Department-run club sports for M&W Rowing and M&W Rugby
- Student-run club sports include Equestrian, Sailing, Ultimate Frisbee, Skiing, Quidditch; also many intramural and fitness opportunities.

Graduation Rates:

- 91% graduate in 6 years.
- 87% graduate in 4 years.

Successful Graduates

Within 6 months of graduating:

- About 20% enter grad school; 70% enter the work force; 5% participate in a fellowship or service program (Fulbright, Watson, Peace Corp, Etc.); 5% undecided/seeking.
- For the past 5 years- Medical School Acceptance Rate: 87%; Law School Acceptance Rate: 96%
- Top Industries for Class of 2018: Education; Health/Medicine/Public Health; Banking/Business/Consulting; Technology; Arts; Science/Math/Engineering.

Applying to Vassar

Vassar offered admission to 23.7% of the 8,961 students who applied for admission to the Class of 2023.

- Vassar accepts the Common Application (commonapp.org), Coalition Application or Questbridge Application.
- The 5 required parts of the application:
 - Transcript (most important)
 - Standardized testing
 - 2 letters of recommendation
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Essay
- Your Space is an optional, open section of the application where students can include any supplementary material they would like.
- Students can submit studio art, music, or dance submissions through Slideroom as part of the Arts Portfolio.

The Transcript In-Depth

- The most competitive applicants have about an A/A- unweighted GPA and are in the top 10-15% of their class.
- Rigorous college preparatory high school program with honors and Advanced Placement/IB courses (if offered).
- The high school program should include (to the maximum extent possible) four years of English, foreign language, history/social science, mathematics and science, or a course of studies of comparable breadth and rigor to this program.

Standardized Testing In-Depth

- **Vassar requires:**
 - Either SAT OR ACT
- **Important Notes:**
 - The optional Writing Test for the SAT and the ACT are NOT required.
 - SAT Subject Tests are NOT required, and students opting not to send Subject Tests will not be penalized. However, SAT Subject Tests will be considered if submitted as part of a testing profile.
- Full details on testing requirements on the website.

Standardized Testing In-Depth (Continued)

The average test score (middle 50%) for admitted students are:

- SAT (EBRW + M): 1390-1500
- ACT Composite: 31-34
- Middle 50% means 25% of admitted students scored below the range and 25% scored above the range.

Extracurricular and Leadership Expectations

- Significant extracurricular involvement in school or community
- Proven leadership ability and/or evidence of leadership potential.
- Admirable personal qualities including integrity, compassion, tolerance, maturity, vision, passion.

Financial Aid

- Admission decisions are need-blind for US citizens and permanent residents.
- Vassar meets 100% of demonstrated financial need. Vassar does not offer merit, artistic or athletic scholarships. All of our financial aid is need-based.
- Roughly \$69 million spent on need-based aid each year.
- Average financial aid package: \$50,275
 - 94% is grant money (\$47,191)
- Applicants submit the CSS PROFILE, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and tax returns
- Helpful web sites:
 - www.admissions.vassar.edu: click on "Financial Aid."
 - www.finaid.org: informative website with numerous links to other financial aid sites.

Other Facts

- Vassar offers up to two college credits for Advanced Placement exam results of 4 and 5.
- Vassar offers up to two college credits for International Baccalaureate (IB) scores of 5, 6, and 7 on IB Higher Level exams.

Application Deadlines

Early Decision I: November 15

Early Decision II: January 1

Regular Decision: January 1

- Applicants may request an alumnae/i interview online through the admission website once they submit their application, but interviews are not required

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Vassar accept the Common Application?

Yes. Vassar uses the Common Application, but we will also accept the Coalition and Questbridge Applications.

Which departments are the best?

Each department has an impressive array of course offerings and many offer research opportunities. Many departments (including Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Drama, Film, and Music) have their own magnificently equipped buildings.

What are Vassar's 5 most popular majors?

Economics, Political Science, Biology, Psychology, English.

Does Vassar have a core curriculum?

No. Our flexible open curriculum allows students to take advantage of the breadth and depth of our offerings.

Does Vassar have required courses?

No. However, we do have some requirements to ensure that students develop the skills they need to be successful at Vassar and after they graduate:

- The First-Year Writing Seminar: a one-semester course offered in many disciplines, focuses on written and oral work.
- The quantitative requirement: a one-semester course that features the use of numbers. Examples include courses in mathematics, natural sciences, psychology, certain economics courses, etc.
- The foreign language proficiency requirement: one year at the introductory level or one semester at the intermediate level. Students may test out of this requirement.

How are the sciences at Vassar?

Vassar completed an extensive renovation of 3 existing buildings housing various STEM departments, as well as the completion of a new, 80,000 sq. ft. science center. There are exceptional course offerings in the sciences. Students have access to the most modern and sophisticated lab equipment. Many students work directly with professors on funded scientific research.

Are there research opportunities?

URSI (Undergraduate Research Summer Institute) offers students valuable experience in planning and executing original research in the sciences with faculty sponsors.

The Ford Scholars Program involves students in collaborative research in the humanities and social sciences. Students can also do research with professors during the academic year starting the second semester of the first year.

Does Vassar have a pre-med program?

Our curriculum offers excellent preparation for medical, dental, and veterinary school. Vassar's small classes and opportunities for personal interactions in class and during laboratories allow our professors to write significant and convincing letters of recommendation. Our admission rate is well above the national average. Vassar does not pre-screen or restrict those who want to apply to medical school.

Are internships available?

Academic departments offer credit-bearing internships through our Community Engaged Learning program. Well over half of our students complete field work prior to graduation, in a broad range of areas such as health, medical, social service, governmental, political, and environmental and planning agencies. They also work in the arts and in business, educational, publishing, advertising, and scientific fields. Internships are typically elected during the school year but may be elected in the summer.

Is the campus safe?

Vassar has an excellent safety record. Residence buildings are accessible by student ID card. The campus is well lit and uniformed security officers are on duty around the clock. The College maintains a blue-light emergency phone network, a shuttle bus service, an on-call campus escort service, and a student patrol network.

What is there to do in the Poughkeepsie area?

The greater Poughkeepsie area has shopping malls, movie theaters, museums, galleries, and extensive cultural programming in addition to volunteer and recreational activities. There are many restaurants, delis, bookstores, and shops in the area right around the campus. The Hudson Valley is rich in historical sites, hiking and biking trails, and riverside recreation opportunities. New York City is easily accessible by commuter railroad.

Why Choose a Liberal Arts College?

Depending on your region of the country, students and their families may be most familiar with large research and state universities, and are not familiar with the unique opportunities a small liberal arts college can provide. Below are talking points that can help compare a liberal arts college, like Vassar, with “Big State U.”

- **Academic Flexibility:** Students do not to choose a major/course of studies in advance. Majors/concentrations are chosen after enrollment, usually during the second year, allowing students the option to explore multiple areas before deciding—and even change their mind without transferring programs.
- **Academic Breadth:** Even after choosing a major, typically 1/2 to 2/3 of a student’s courses will be outside a major. Rather than just a narrow education, students graduate with broad-based knowledge across many fields, and can even choose additional majors unrelated to the first.
- **Adaptability:** A broad-based liberal arts education gives students multiple skills. Training is not just for one profession, but rather provides skills for any future path to allow them to be more well-rounded and adaptable to a changing job market. Emphasis is on critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, with opportunities to pursue study in many different academic areas.
- **Discussion-based courses:** Rather than large, impersonal lectures that are often taught by graduate teaching assistants, the style of instruction, even in intro classes, is small seminar classes taught by professors. A small class size allows for much more interaction with the professor and peers and promotes active learning. Students are actively engaged in their education rather than passive listeners.
- **Emphasis on the Undergraduate:** Unlike at larger universities, liberal arts colleges only offer undergraduate bachelor’s degrees. The absence of graduate students pursuing masters or doctorate degrees means 100% of faculty time and resources are devoted to the undergraduates. All the research opportunities on campus go to the undergraduate students, meaning students often have greater access to research and internship opportunities, as early as their sophomore year.
- **Holistic grading:** Course grades are not based solely on one final exam. Grades are given based on a combination of work done throughout the academic semester, including class participation.
- **Campus life:** Completely residential communities mean that students live on campus for all four years. Housing is generally guaranteed and on-campus for all four years. College life is all-encompassing, not just a part of a student’s day. Many offerings in activities, the arts, and sports provide further means of growth. The diverse campus community becomes a major avenue for learning outside of the classroom.