SHOULD I GO TO A LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY?

By Sam Weber ’15

When I began my college search, I had no idea what I wanted in a university. Frankly, when my mother suggested liberal arts schools, I had no idea what “liberal arts” meant. That it was dedicated to the liberal arts certainly wasn’t one of the reasons why I chose St. Lawrence; however, four years later, I realize that’s one of the best things about it.

In hindsight, I wish I could go back and kick my 18-year-old self for even thinking about attending anything but a liberal arts institution. Where else could a student major in both mathematics and studio art, while also earning a minor in peace studies? Or apply biology expertise to a senior project in creative writing?

Liberal arts students have the privilege of learning a wide array of subjects, integrating their knowledge from different fields to build a cohesive, yet diverse, education. I never would have guessed that something I learned in my American Romanticism literature course would have come in handy in an environmental studies class, but that’s the brilliance of the liberal arts.

Whether it’s an individual class that combines disciplines, such as the poetry and printmaking First-Year Program course here at St. Lawrence, or a combination of courses that enhance one another, it’s impossible to graduate from a liberal arts university without a wide understanding of the world. This is what allows our alumni to succeed in any field. We don’t have to specialize because we’ve received an education that makes us especially qualified for any career.

Ultimately, St. Lawrence’s liberal arts curriculum taught me how to think independently and effectively communicate my thoughts. That’s the key to why our alumni are so successful. We are dynamic, innovative, confident, articulate thinkers who can contribute our expertise to myriad fields.

In classical antiquity, the liberal arts were the subjects and skills that were considered essential for a free person. While the idea of a liberal arts education has expanded over the years, that original definition still applies. AS LAURENTIANS, WE ARE EDUCATED. WE ARE VERSATILE. WE ARE FREE.
WHY DID I RECEIVE THIS AND WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

By Jeff Rickey
Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

Warning! You are about to embark on the adventure of your life and others are assisting with your plans!

You should be honored you are receiving a lot of mail from colleges! It means you have the attributes they are seeking and they want you to be aware they are aware of you.

Here are some helpful hints to handling the information you are receiving:

• Review each piece that comes to you. Some of the colleges will be familiar, but most won’t be.

• You will usually be required to respond in some way, so **take the action required for the colleges that pique your interest.**

• When you respond, use an email address you will check regularly. Establish an address dedicated to the college search process, and check it daily!

• Once you have identified the colleges and universities that interest you, **schedule visits and attend college fairs, interviews and high school presentations.**

• Ask that your name and contact information be taken off the records of the schools you are not interested in.

Being on a college’s mailing and contact list does not guarantee admission, but it does indicate your interest in the school, something that is important for the college to know. Yes, it’s an adventure, and I hope these hints will assist you on your way!

For additional helpful hints about the college admissions process, regularly visit the Dean’s Desk on the Admissions website.

www.stlawu.edu/admissions

SMALL LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES MAKE IT EASY

By Hannah Chanatry ’15

Hundreds of students mill about, on foot, on bikes, on longboards, in pursuit of sunshine and free candy. A light breeze blends music from one end of the crowded path to the other. The flow of foot traffic is interrupted only when someone pulls off to the side, one of the tables catching their eye.

This is the fall Student Organization Fair at St. Lawrence University. Nearly every club is out, enticing students to sign up and give their organization a try. From student government to literary magazines to theme houses, there’s bustle anywhere.

Becoming involved on campus was the best decision I could have possibly made. The clubs I joined led to my best memories and closest friends. I will never forget the people I got to know through the Laurentian Singers, the skills I learned as an editor for *The Underground Journal*, or the connections I made with the Student Alumni Association.

Still, getting involved can be intimidating, especially if it’s your first year. As you start thinking about what you may want to join, and looking for colleges that offer them, keep these three points in mind:

1. **CHOOSE SOMETHING FOR YOU**

Get away from the notion that you need to find things that look good on a resume. Involvement is about doing what you love for the simple reason that you love it. Is music your passion? Hiking? Food and conversation? Follow your heart!

2. **TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH**

It can be daunting to mingle with new people. Just go for it! If they want their club or organization to continue, the members will encourage you. If something doesn’t pan out as you hoped, you will still come out of it with stories to tell and adventures to look back on.

3. **CREATE YOUR OWN**

So the club you want to join doesn’t exist on campus? Start it yourself! There is bound to be someone out there to help you; look for a college where that’s possible.

Getting involved on campus is one of the best things you can do while at college. It will be one of the highlights of your experience.

So jump in — you will not be disappointed.
Consider This...

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING AT COLLEGES

By Kelly Gamache ’15

Knowing the right questions to ask yourself when choosing a college can be difficult to think about when you’re still in high school, itching to start your college adventure. To give you a hand, I’ve narrowed it down to four simple questions to help you with your one complex decision.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT SIZE FOR YOU?

I love the strong sense of community that develops on a small campus like St. Lawrence’s. But maybe you’d rather not run into five people you know on the way to your 8:30 a.m. class! It’s also important to think about whether you can handle a lecture room of over a hundred students, or if small discussion-based classes are better for you.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO STUDY?

It’s okay not to know what you want your major to be right off the bat. However, it’s good to have an idea about your academic interests and choose a school that has some strong departments you could be interested in. It’s also important to have a sense of how a school will help you on your career path. St. Lawrence’s career services resources helped me channel academic strengths to pursue a career path that reflects my interests. It’s never too early to think about the future.

CITY, COLLEGE TOWN, OR “MORE TREES THAN PEOPLE”?

I was surprised at how much I loved going to school in a rural area. St. Lawrence is perfect for students who love doing just about everything outdoors; with the Adirondacks close by, adventures are endless. And Ottawa, Canada’s capital city, is just over an hour away, with even more to explore! The North Country is an exciting place and there are always musicians, comedians, and renowned scholars stopping by to visit campus. You can also take part in numerous internship opportunities in the surrounding area. So, what type of environment is best for you?

COULD I CALL THIS PLACE HOME?

I remember when I first walked onto St. Lawrence’s campus: I got that indescribable feeling of familiarity and knew I wanted to call St. Lawrence home one day. If you’re going to be spending four years away at college, you should choose a place where you feel at home, however you define that feeling. When touring or reading about any school, look at the campus and ask yourself, “Could I live here?”

SO WHO WROTE THIS STUFF, ANYWAY?

All of the writers for this newsletter were or are St. Lawrence students (“were” because four of them graduated in May 2015, and a couple of them wrote in present tense because they were still here at the time). All are or were students in English 409, an advanced writing course that is also an internship in the University Communications office.

From left, Hannah Chanatry ’15 spent the summer after her graduation as a journalism intern in Turkey. Caroline Fleischauer ’15 remained at St. Lawrence as an Admissions intern for the summer, and then enrolled in the University’s graduate program in education. Kelly Gamache ’15 is a marketing specialist for the Blood Donor Center at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, while Samantha Weber ’15 took a job as a reporter for a newspaper in Bozeman, Mont.

From left, Charlotte Crawford ’16, an English major from Litchfield, Conn., was an intern at St. Lawrence’s National Public Radio affiliate over the summer. Rebecca Doser ’16 runs a popular food blog and Instagram account, breakfastwithbex.com and @breakfastwithbex, respectively. Alexa Mitchell ’16, of Westport, N.Y., is an editor at St. Lawrence’s student-run newspaper and co-captain of the dance team.
Applying

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD APPLICATION ESSAY IN FIVE EASY LESSONS

By Caroline Fleischauer ’15

After four years at St. Lawrence, I can say that I’ve written a fair number of papers. But few have made my palms sweat as much as my Common Application (CA) essay. Applying to college was a daunting-enough process without worrying about making myself sound interesting or smart in just 650 words, tops. But don’t fret! Here are some tips to help you to hit that “Submit” button with confidence:

1. WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING THAT’S NOT IN YOUR APPLICATION OR RESUME

Admissions counselors read everything: your application, your resume, your essay, any supplements that you submit. They have a pretty good idea about your history as a student and your four years of high school. So in your essay, write about something new. Do you have a gnarly scar? Do you spend summers counseling at a camp for kids with cancer? Choose something that helps them get a better sense of who you are.

2. HAVE A CLEAR MESSAGE ABOUT YOURSELF, DEMONSTRATED THROUGH A SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE

We’re not asking for a thesis. We just want to know the point of your beautifully written essay. What do you want us to know about you? How has whatever aspect of your life that you’ve described on paper been significant to you as a person? End your essay with confidence that you’ve really said something.

3. CLARITY IS KEY

Your CA essay isn’t the place to practice the new words that you learned for the SAT. You’re allowed only 650 at most, so make every one of them count. Be straightforward, to the point, and don’t overuse metaphors or other flowery language. What’s most important is your voice coming across in your essay; don’t let it be lost in a swirling vortex of symbolism.

4. READ THE PROMPTS!

That was a fantastic story about overcoming your broken leg to go on and win a state championship, but the prompt was asking about your academic interests! Don’t make the mistake of not answering the question. Read your chosen prompt thoroughly. Twice. Then, before you submit your essay, read over your response to check one more time that you’ve responded appropriately. Making sure that your essay is relevant is half the battle.

5. PROOFREAD

Finally, proofread your essay! No one wants to stumble through an admissions essay full of typos and incorrect verb tenses. This is your chance to put your best foot forward, so make sure your essay presents you in the best light. If you don’t put time and effort into your application, no one else is going to want to, either.

There they are, the five secrets to writing a fantastic admissions essay. Remember, most important is that your essay represents you – do yourself justice!

THE 2015-2016 “COMMON APP” ESSAY PROMPTS

(From the guidelines: “The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice.”)

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?

4. Describe a problem you’ve solved or a problem you’d like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.
“WHAT’S A GOOD QUESTION TO ASK ON A CAMPUS VISIT?”

“How is the food on campus? How many different options are there?”
DREW SMOLCYNISKI ’17
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Economics

“What is the best thing to do by yourself on campus?”
THOMAS MATHIASEN ’16
Concord, Massachusetts
Government

“Where are some good, quiet study spots other than the library?”
CHARLOTTE KIRBY ’19
Rye, New York

“Do you keep in touch with the people you met your first year?”
LIBBY MCNABB ’19
Rochester, New York

“How do students embrace the North Country weather?”
EILEEN TORIBIO ’17
Brooklyn, New York
Performance and Communication Arts

“What study abroad programs and fellowships do you offer?”
ANA HERNANDEZ ’17
Madrid, Spain
Biology

“How prevalent is Greek life within the campus social scene? What alternatives are there?”
LUCAS HOWE ’17
Barre, Vermont
Psychology

“How connected is the University with the community surrounding it?”
ELISE MINER ’16
Scotch Plains, New York
Government & Performance and Communication Arts

“How can you get involved in theatre on campus if you don’t want to act?”
ELLE LUCAS ’16
Essex Center, Vermont
Spanish

“Do you think having a car on campus is a good idea?”
TAYLOR DRAPER ’17
Morrisonville, New York
Sociology & Business in the Liberal Arts

“How do you feel about the accessibility of the professors?”
JESSE LOWELL ’19
Gray, Maine

“What kinds of jobs are available on campus?”
ANNA CUMMINGS-KRUEGER ’18
Minneapolis, Minnesota

“Is the academic environment more collaborative or competitive?”
SYDNEY FALLONE ’17
Rochester, New York
Government and Economics

“What is the University’s retention rate?”
SABRINA WALTON ’18
Sharon, Connecticut
Anthropology and Government

“How is the food on campus? How many different options are there?”
YOSHIHITOMI KOBAYASHI ’17
Toyonaka, Osaka, Japan
English

“What are the most popular majors at SLU and what kind of job opportunities do those majors generally have after graduation?”
VINA SMITH-RAMAKRISHNAN ’18
Whitesboro, New York
Biology

“What percentage of students study abroad?”
LOUIE FREDA ’17
Watertown, New York
Government

“If you could do it all over again, would you?”
JONATHAN DEMOSTHENE ’16
Norwalk, Connecticut
Mathematics

Major(s) indicated where known; St. Lawrence students normally declare their major(s) at the end of their sophomore year. Compiled by University Communications interns Charlotte Crawford ’16, Rebecca Doser ’16 and Alexa Mitchell ’16.
Anthonia Clemente ’82 believes the liberal arts, coupled with well-grounded technical skills, are the foundation for a top-quality employee. That’s one reason why he recruits St. Lawrence students for internships at Canaras Capital Management, a small firm he founded and serves as CEO that deals with alternative investment strategies. So when he was asked to participate in the University’s New York City Semester, he was eager to help.

It was that program that brought Tonisha Kerr ’15 to Clemente and Canaras. Required to undertake an internship, she was drawn to the size of the company and the work Clemente and his team were doing. From day one she was an integral part of the firm.

“I worked alongside analysts and other interns to evaluate companies going through some form of merger, acquisition or recapitalization, basing my research on capital structure, operations, financial performance and industry trends,” she says.

Following Commencement last May, she made her way back to New York as a full-time employee at Canaras.

“I attended meetings and conference calls to learn about new deals and companies, and wrote reports which discussed financial trends and creditworthiness and outlined the strengths and weaknesses of these potential borrowers. In these reports, I offered ratings and lending decisions to the analysts, based on the research I’d conducted.”

Tonisha also worked one-on-one with Clemente on several occasions. “Not many interns can say they’ve done that,” she says.

“Tonisha is a wonderful example of what SLU students have to offer,” Clemente says. “Because of the rigorous candidate standards St. Lawrence has for participation in the semester program, every student is high-caliber.”

Tonisha discovered her interests in finance because Clemente offered her the chance to learn. Following Commencement last May, she made her way back to New York as a full-time employee at Canaras.