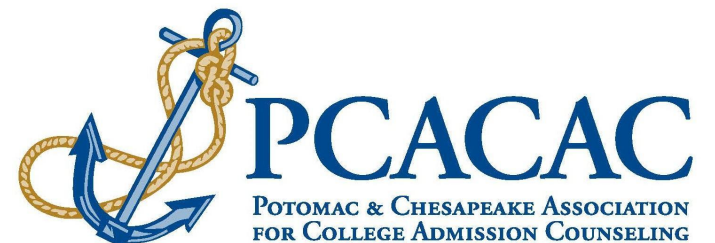


Welcome to the 21st Annual Summer Institute

Valued Insights: The Role of The Recommendation Letters

B4

July 22, 2024



Presenter/Panelist

Kelly Valette/ College Counselor
Archbishop Spalding High School

Contact information

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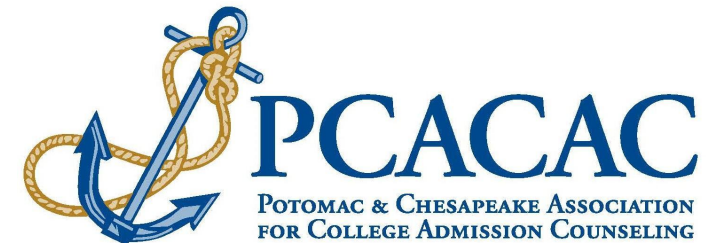


Presenter/Panelist

Kathleen Voss/ Regional Director of Admission
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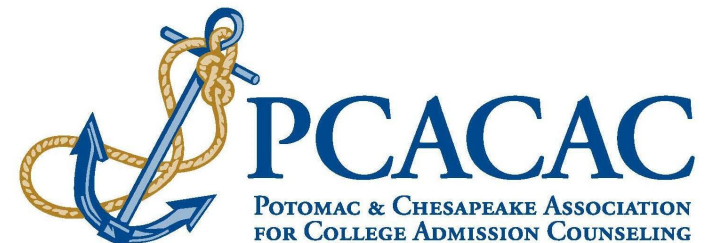


Learning Objectives

Objective 1: Discuss the reasoning behind different letters of recommendation from the role of both the high school college counselor and the admissions representative.

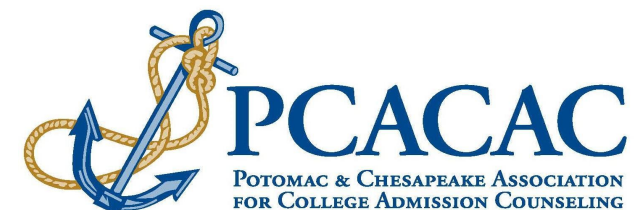
Objective 2: Understand the new trends and the impact they have on the letter of recommendation.

Objective 3: Review examples of effective and ineffective letters.



Purpose of the Counselor Letter

- Providing context to the student in an overall setting
- Academic Character
 - academic accolades, awards, learning differences, (PLTW)
- Areas of Impact
 - club involvement, leadership positions, community involvement
- Surveys
 - parent & student surveys (brag sheets)

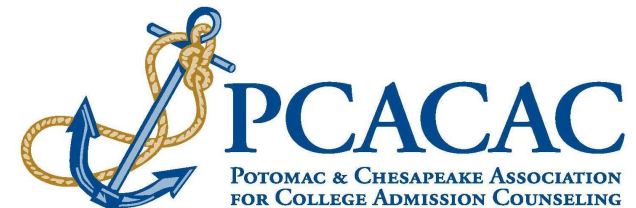


Student Survey questions

1. List the activities, clubs and athletics you have participated in throughout your HS years. Include inside and outside of HS activities and list the years after it. i.e. Wrestling 10th/11th and plan on 12th.
2. Please list any awards, honors or leadership positions held inside and outside of HS, academic or athletic.
3. How many community service hours do you have? Where did you volunteer? What did you do there? Briefly describe what you got out of it.
4. Describe any work experiences or internships you may have had.
5. Which activities are most meaningful and/or do you most enjoy and why? Feel free to discuss more than one



6. Describe a personal accomplishment of which you are most proud, and explain why.
7. What do your parents or relatives expect of you? Have they expressed specific plans or goals? How do you feel about this? How do their impressions differ from yours? How are they the same?
8. What courses or topics excite you the most? How have you tried to expand your knowledge beyond the classroom?
9. Have you worked to your potential in high school? How well do your grades at Spalding reflect your ability as a student? What do you consider to be the best measure of your potential success in college?
10. Are there any outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance? Is there anything on your transcript you feel needs clarification?
11. What are you thinking of for a major or career? If you do not have any specific ideas, do you have a general idea of the area in which you would like to work?

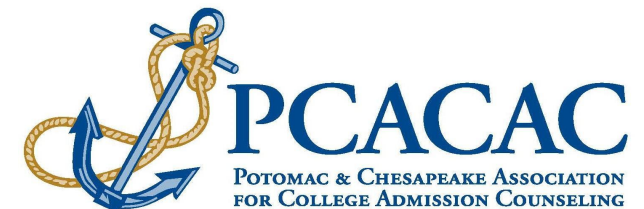


Parent Survey questions

1. Please list some adjectives that describe your son/daughter and explain why you chose these qualities. Please refrain from using “kind”, “determined”, “hard-working” and “intelligent” - all Spalding students have those qualities!
2. Which qualities or accomplishments of your son/daughter would you like colleges to know about? In what areas do they shine? (1-2 paragraphs)
3. Give us some anecdotes or stories (high school years) that demonstrate qualities unique to your son/daughter. They can be humorous or serious. Sometimes these stories shine a light on a particular interest or career choice...or just their personality. (1-2 paragraphs)
4. Our student's high school experience has been pleasurable/frustrating because _____. Don't hesitate to write about both aspects. (1-2 paragraphs)
5. To what extent has your child been genuinely interested in academic work and made full use of his/her intellectual potential? Has he/she had any interesting summer experiences/internships/opportunities? (1-2 paragraphs)

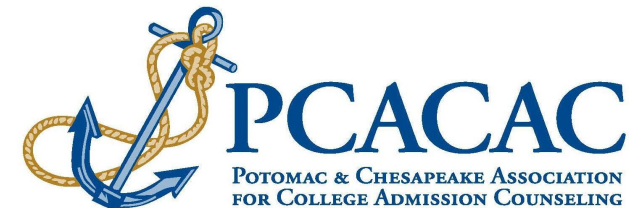


6. Does your child have learning style differences that have warranted special accommodations? If "yes," please describe. Do we have your permission to share such information with colleges if we deem it appropriate to help explain any academic issues? (1-2 paragraphs)
7. Are there any circumstances or special relationships with specific colleges that may affect your student's choice of college(s), or his/her chances of admission to any college? (example: legacy, relative is an employee, etc.)
8. Are there any particular restrictions (cost, part of the country, size, special programs, etc.) that we should know about at this time?
9. Is there anything you wish to add that would help us in writing the Counselor Recommendation Letter about your student? For example, has your child faced any personal challenges or difficult experiences - family situations, moves, illnesses, losses, etc.? Anything that would need to be explained academically?
10. Do you give permission for your child's college counselor to send out his/her transcript to colleges, NCAA, and scholarship programs, as well as communicate with colleges as appropriate?(Yes/No)



Purpose of the Teacher Letter

- Providing context to the student in a classroom setting
 - Brag sheets
- Academic Character
 - academic improvements, initiative, overcoming significant struggles



Teacher Brag Sheet

REQUEST FOR RECOMMENDATION LETTER

(Maximum of 2 letters- download and complete this form for each teacher)

Student:

This form should be uploaded as a 'Brag Sheet' when requesting two teacher letters of recommendation electronically on Maia. You should have high marks and show a strong effort in their class.

Student's Formal Name: _____

Date Requested in Maia: _____

Course(s) taken with teacher: Circle One: Grade:

1) _____ Year taken 9 10 11 12 Grade earned _____

2) _____ Year taken 9 10 11 12 Grade earned _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation to support my candidacy. Please email the above-requested letter of recommendation to Mrs. Bailey in the College Counseling Office by September 15th. Please make sure my formal name is on the letter.

Students: Please provide detailed answers to the below questions to help your teacher write a strong, unique college recommendation. ***This is required.***

In what way has this class impacted you?

Name ONE paper/project/presentation that made you proud OR stand out in the class.

Give three characteristics of yourself within the context of this class. What were your strengths? Weaknesses?

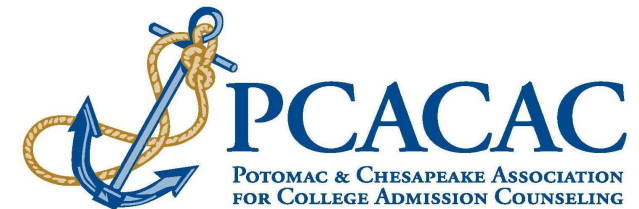
If you encountered difficulty with the course concepts or assignments, how did you work to improve?

*I give this teacher permission to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf and understand that I will **NOT** have access to review a copy of this letter at any time in the future.*

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Things to stay away from

- Reiterating School Profile
- Recommendation not an Evaluation
- Full Narrative
- Generic description
 - simply editing the name



SCOTUS Decision and Impact on LOR

Counselor CAN speak to race in the letter of application but it must be done appropriately

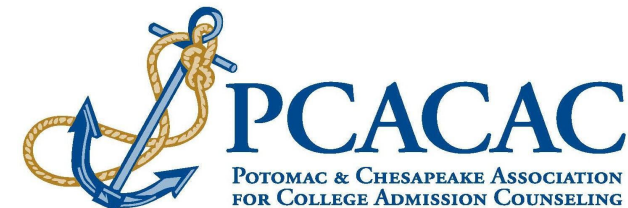
School policy ... what does your district recommend

Context and Relevance....

Student's Comfort and Permission

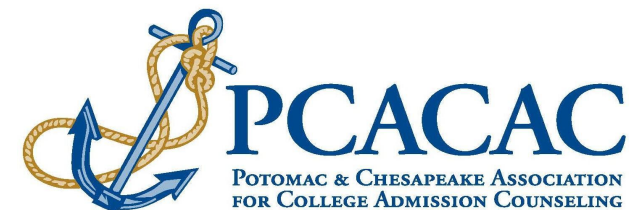
Avoiding Stereotypes and Assumptions

Remain Holistic and Comprehensive



Role of AI and the Letter of Recommendation

- YES... AI can help you craft a letter
- Be careful not to lose the humanity
- AI does not express a personal relationship with the student
- Does your school support the use of AI as a tool?
- What are their policies



The good, the bad the ugly

FULLER, 150 SENIOR CLASS, 2 COUNSELORS at MS

3919 Brookcrest Circle
Decatur, GA 30032
678-874-2202

October 26, 2022

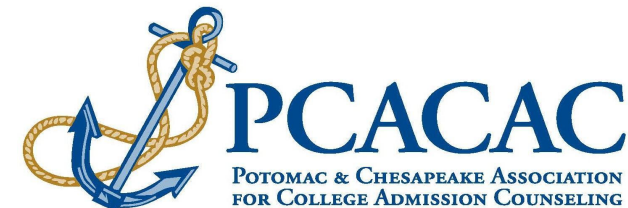
To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Alexander [REDACTED]. Alexander is a smart young man who is focused on achieving his personal best. He is respectful and consistent when completing task. I know that what he sets his mind to will be accomplished.

Although Alexander has only been enrolled at Towers for a short time, he has expanded his depth of knowledge by enrolling in AP class while continuing to maintained a 4.1 GPA. Additionally, he is a very well-rounded young man who is destined for greatness.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectful,



I am writing this letter to wholeheartedly recommend Addy [REDACTED] for admission to your admired institution. As Addy's high school counselor for the past three years at Allen High School, I have had the privilege of witnessing her dedication, both academically and in various extracurricular activities.

Addy is an outstanding academic achiever. She is an International Baccalaureate Diploma Candidate with a weighted GPA of 4.50, placing her in the top 3% of her class. Her exceptional scores of 35 on the ACT and 1480 on the SAT, further illustrate her academic prowess. Additionally, she was recognized as the 'Most Outstanding IB Theory of Knowledge Student' in 2023, an honor that speaks volumes about her intellectual curiosity.

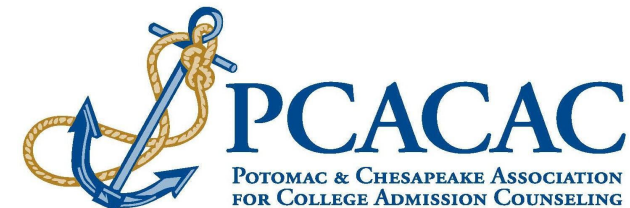
Beyond her academics, Addy is a born leader. She has been a proactive President for multiple organizations including the Spanish National Honor Society and the Community of International Baccalaureate Scholars. In both roles, she has successfully planned and executed a range of activities that have contributed to the cultural and intellectual richness of our school community.

Addy's dedication to service is just as impressive. As a Lead Organizer for the Key Club, she has devoted significant time to community service, proving herself to be compassionate and empathetic. Her long-standing involvement with the Angel League Buddy program shows her commitment to inclusivity and her ability to connect with people from diverse backgrounds.

Her extra-curricular engagements, ranging from piano to basketball, show a balanced and well-rounded individual. Notably, Addy has also been employed as a Cashier at Panera Bread, where she has demonstrated strong work ethics and responsibility.

Addy possesses an array of skills that make her an excellent candidate for your institution. She is communicative, organized, and highly analytical. I am particularly impressed by her optimistic approach to challenges and her proficiency in conversational Spanish, an asset that underscores her multicultural competence.

In conclusion, Addy [REDACTED] is an outstanding student with a strong academic record, leadership skills, and a compassionate spirit. She embodies the qualities that your esteemed university would want to foster and grow. I give her my highest recommendation without any reservations.



LOR Bullet Style

Recommendation)

Counselor Recommendation For Joseph "Joey" [REDACTED]

7/27/05)

Distinctive Qualities

Joey's engagement as a learner and collaborator shifted throughout high school from his strong inclination towards independent work and personal excellence in the 9th and 10th grades to becoming a dedicated and skilled collaborator and team leader in the 11th and 12th grades. Joey's involvement in robotics showcased his transition to teamwork. As our robotics team returned to in-person classroom opportunities and competition in his sophomore year, the group needed some student leadership and initiative to excel. Joey stepped up and thrived in that collaborative environment. Now, as team captain and the engineering lead, he routinely gathers the members to problem solve, strategize, and create a team workflow plan. Through this experience, Joey grew significantly, learning to trust his teammates, recognizing the power of collective effort. He realized that he could balance his commitment to self-improvement and personal excellence with his dedication to enhancing his community. Beyond his achievements in robotics, Joey actively participated in the Cottonwood Heights Youth City Council, where he designed a connections system and website to store and analyze data, facilitating the sharing of vital information during disaster response efforts. Additionally, Joey generously shared his musical talents by volunteering to perform piano concerts at his grandmother's memory care facility and local nursing homes, brightening the lives of residents and bringing joy to those he served. Joey's contributions exemplify his commitment to both personal growth and community betterment, a combination that he will continue in college.

Intellectual Growth and Trends

- In this year's senior class, the highest total number of GPA weighted courses, including AP, Advanced Topics (AT) and/or Advanced Research (AR) courses, taken by any student is 16. Joey has taken a total of 13 GPA weighted courses, 5 of them in his senior year, **which is a very demanding course selection at [REDACTED]**
- Joey's intellectual adaptability shines through his diverse pursuits, from excelling in AP & AT STEM subjects and leading the Robotics team, to honing his public speaking and argumentative skills on the debate team, to being one of three seniors completing our Chinese Language curriculum by taking AT Chinese this year.
- **Highlights of Deep Learning:** Last year, Joey was a data science researcher for an Electrical Engineering and Computer Science professor at the University of Utah where he engaged in data collection and analysis to study eye-tracking movements. He developed new lab skills, collaborated with a team of student researchers, and contributed to a paper that will be submitted for publication.

Areas of Significant Impact

- In addition to his ongoing participation and leadership on our robotics team, Joey has also been involved with his local city council since the 10th grade. He began as a council member, then the treasurer, and then the Service Officer, where he took on an active role in planning and organizing the city's major events and service opportunities. His data analytics, computer science, and team leadership skills came in handy as he led the service project to create a software system and database for the disaster preparedness efforts. His commitment to finding meaningful projects demonstrates his genuine passion for community betterment.
- Since he was a young child, Joey has viewed the piano as a means to express his creativity and as a way to bring joy to others. His transition from being a solo pianist to a valued member of the school's advanced chamber ensemble (ACE) allowed him the opportunity to experience collaboration, synchronization, and harmonizing in a new aspect of his life. Whether he is playing with ACE, alone during his daily practices, or for nursing home residents, Joey loves to master challenging pieces, perform for others, and to see the joy and happiness it brings them.

Readiness for College & Recommendation

Joey's high school years are evidence of his commitment to self-improvement and the betterment of his community. His passion for personal growth has driven him to tackle rigorous academic and intellectual challenges and his dedication to making positive community contributions will continue in college which is why I enthusiastically recommend him to you.

LOR Bullet Style cont

Secondary School Report

Francis is a holistic student who is talented in many fields, such as academics, music, and sports. He is very focused on reaching his dreams and completing the tasks he needs to accomplish what needs to be done. Francis is very cooperative with others and lifts the spirit of the group he is working with. His friends look up to him for support, guidance, and inspiration.

Academic Character

- Francis took AP Music Theory this past school year, and though he did earn the score he wanted, he still considers it to be one of the most fascinating classes that he has taken. He enjoys learning new ways to construct melodies and harmonies and applying that new-found knowledge to his playing. He tries to train his ear by practicing playing by ear or naming note pitches throughout the day. At home, he watches videos about music theory he can apply to guitar or bass. Francis is continuing to expand his knowledge of rhetoric. Through the author Jay Heinrichs, he learned that there is so much more to be discovered in rhetoric. Though his book "Thank You For Arguing" was an in-class assigned book, he plans to read another one of his books, "How to Argue with a Cat", outside of the classroom.

Activities and Areas of Impact

- Francis took the initiative and started the English National Honor Society at Archbishop Spalding. He wanted a way to give back to the school that brought out the best in him. This was the lasting gift he wanted to give Spalding that will continue even after he graduates. He believes that in the same way, math and science can create engineers and scientists, English creates leaders.
- Just a few months ago, Francis and his friends from his high school Jazz performing group were listening to fun, popular Jazz music. His friend Joey stood up and started singing along to Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon," and the general reaction among Francis and his friends was "Well, at least the instrumentation of the backing track sounded good!" This spurred a flash of inspiration into Francis' mind and he told his friends, "Hey guys, we could definitely play this." They all agreed and Francis successfully organized and composed a complete music score from scratch of around 7 instruments, and they later were able to record their performance at a studio in the University of Maryland's Clarice Performing Arts Center. While his friend Joey took a step down from singing the vocals, Francis was able to gain the help of a university student named Cecilia, a double major in both vocals and piano performance, to aid in their recording by singing the piece and rounding out their project. What was once a fun afterthought of a moment turned into an impressive musical project, and it was all led and guided by Francis through his great admiration of music as a hobby and his skills as a determined and cooperative leader.

Well-rounded, goal-oriented, compassionate, and a leader. Francis would make a positive impact on

<https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2018/04/23/it-may-be-time-rethink-admissions-letters-recommendation-opinion#>

<https://www.rowlandhall.org/fineprint/story/~board/all/post/revitalizing-the-rec-letter>

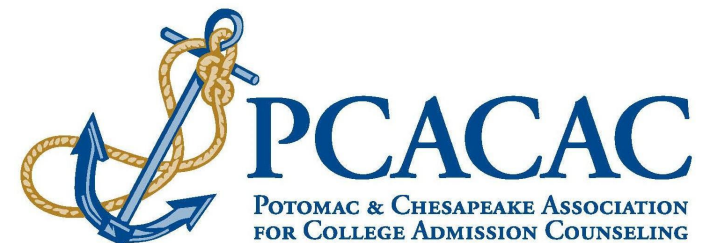
Audience feedback time (aka QUESTIONS)

Comments?

Insights?

Input?

Information gaps?



Please. . .

Complete the session evaluation on the Summer Institute app before leaving the room today.

Thank you!

