

**Vassar College
Alumni Admission
Ambassador
Program**

**Chairman
Handbook**

2008 – 2009

Thank you for your help as the chairman of one of our 120 Alumni Admission Program committees.

Last year, 1221 Alumni Admission Program volunteers interviewed 2690 applicants to the Class of 2012. Members of Vassar's AAP also represented Vassar at 117 college fairs and hosted receptions for admitted and enrolling students. Without question, this impressive set of accomplishments underscores the invaluable commitment that Vassar alumnae/i make to their alma mater. The Office of Admission could not enroll a dynamic, talented, diverse incoming class year after year without the help of alumni volunteers.

We are always available to help you and your committee members in any way we can.

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Contact Information

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Chairman Responsibilities

Thank you for agreeing to be a key member of the Vassar College Alumni Admission Program team. As the AAP chairman you have four responsibilities.

1. Encourage your volunteers to keep their contact information current with the College.

The Admission Office will provide you a current list of volunteers. This includes the most contact information they have provided to the Alumnae and Alumni of Vassar College (AAVC) office.

Please encourage volunteers to keep check their contact information current online by logging into Alumnae and Alumni of Vassar College web site at <http://www.aavc.vassar.edu>.

2. Assign interviews to committee members.

The Admission Office will send interview requests to you electronically. You can expect the first list of requests in mid-October, with additions to the list about every three weeks until the beginning of February. Here are suggestions for assigning interviews from experienced AAP chairmen:

- Send an e-mail message to all committee members listing the name and high school or city of each applicant who has requested an interview. Identify the Early Decision (ED) I and ED II applicants. Interviewers can then volunteer to interview individual applicants.
- Assign interviews to individual committee member based on geography, availability, or other criteria. Chairmen who use this approach emphasize the importance of asking the interviewer to confirm receipt of the request and confirm that s/he will complete the interview within the requested time frame.
- Some of the larger committees assign ED I interviews, ED II interviews, and some of the Regular Decision interviews to individual committee members. They then plan an Interview Day to conduct a significant portion of the Regular Decision interviews. (See more information on planning an Interview Day in this handbook.)

3. Congratulate students on their admission to Vassar and welcome enrolling students to the Vassar family.

4. Assign a committee member to represent Vassar at college fairs.

The Admission Office will contact you if there are college fairs in your area where Vassar would like to be represented. Some committees participate in as many as six or eight fairs, and some committees attend none. For more information on representing Vassar at college fairs, see the *Vassar College Alumni Admission Program Volunteer Handbook*.

2008-2009 Checklist of AAP Chairman Activities

Ongoing

- Encourage enthusiastic, committed, knowledgeable alumni to be AAP volunteers.
- At the request of the Admission Office, assign volunteers to represent Vassar at local college fairs.

September

- Office of Admission sends you a list of AAP volunteers in your area.

October

- By October 17: Receive first list of students to interview from the Admission Office and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*

November

- By November 7: Receive additional list of students to interview from the Admission Office (including the final Early Decision Round I applicants whose interview reports must be submitted by December 1) and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*

- By November 28: Receive additional list of students to interview from the Admission Office and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*

December

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

- By December 19: Receive additional list of students to interview from the Admission Office (including the final Early Decision Round II applicants whose interview reports must be submitted by January 19) and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*

* Dependant on the number of applicants in your area

January

- By January 7: Receive additional list of students to interview from the Admission Office and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*
- January 19: Last day to submit interview reports for Early Decision Round II applicants.
- By January 21: Receive additional list of students to interview from the Admission Office and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*

February

- By February 1: Receive final list of students to interview from the Admission Office and assign interviews to committee volunteers.*
- February 27: Last day to submit interview reports for Regular Decision applicants.

April

- Receive list of **admitted** students from the Admissions Office and assign volunteers to congratulate students admitted to the freshman class.
- Optional: Hold reception for admitted students and their families.

May

- Receive list of **enrolling** students from the Admissions Office and oversee "Welcome to the Vassar Family" phone calls and emails to enrolling students.

June

- File an annual report of activities and suggestions with the Office of Admission.

July/August

- Optional: Hold a reception to introduce the incoming freshmen to alumni and other Vassar students from the area.

Sample Welcome Letter to Committee Members

Greetings! Thank you for being a part of the Alumni Admission Committee in _____. I am _____, Class of _____, the committee chairman for this year. I am really looking forward to working with you this year. Together I hope we can help some outstanding local students understand all that the College has to offer from the perspective of a Vassar alum.

I want to emphasize that our role is not just interviewing but also getting top local students interested in Vassar. The Alumni Admission Program was established to add a personal aspect to the admission process and to increase Vassar's visibility. I know that you will enthusiastically share your Vassar experiences with prospective students and serve as a personal contact for students interested in Vassar.

Please reply to this message to let me know the following:

- Your mailing address, phone number and/or cell number, and the e-mail address you check frequently.
- Is this the e-mail address I should use to contact you?
- Can I count on you to interview three or four applicants this year?

In mid-October the Office of Admission will begin sending lists of applicants who want to meet with you or another member of our committee. We will continue to get names of local applicants who have requested an interview until the end of January.

Here are the interview submission deadlines.

Early Decision I	submission deadline is December 1
Early Decision II	submission deadline is January 19
Regular Decision	submission deadline is February 27

Please visit the Alumni Admission Program website at <http://admissions.vassar.edu/aap> to review the newly revised AAP Handbook on line.

Take care,

Your name and class
Your phone number

Excellent Ideas for Chairmen

Here are several excellent ideas from Andy Cohn, Chairman of the East Bay Alumni Admission Program.

Contact Students Directly

To cut down on problems with interviewers not contacting interviewees for weeks or months: I now send out an e-mail directly to the applicant, telling him / her that s/he'll be contacted by an interviewer (whom I name) within the next week or so, and inviting the student to contact me further if he or she has any problems or questions. I also let the interviewer know that I sent this e-mail to the student. I'm hoping this will make the student feel more welcome, or at least that he or she hasn't disappeared into a void. I'm also hoping this lights a fire under the interviewers, who otherwise (some of them, at least) procrastinate a month or two without even contacting the students.

Use Online Newspapers to Learn About Local High Schools

Some student newspapers are now on the web. For novice interviewers, this can be helpful, since they can find out what's going on at the local school and feel like they have something to talk about. It also makes the student feel like the interviewer has an interest in his/her life. Along this line, all local newspapers are on the web, and if I see an article about something of interest at a local high school, I'll download the article from the web site, and then forward it to the interviewer. Or just plugging the name of the high school into Google will yield a bunch of articles from local newspapers.

Browse the Vassar Admission Web Site

The Office of Admission has a fabulous website at <http://admissions.vassar.edu>. Interviewers will feel very confident about fielding questions from applicants after spending some time exploring the site.

Use Current Vassar Students from Your Area as Resources

Current Vassar students from your area can be an excellent resource for both your committee members and for students who are applying to Vassar. Vassar students, like Vassar alumni, are proud of their college and willing to share their experiences at the College with prospective students. Here are a few suggestions for using current students:

- Invite current students and/or their parents to share their Vassar experiences with AAP members.
- You might also want to send a "Welcome back to Vassar" e-mail to your local students introducing yourself as the Alumni Admission Program chairman and inviting them to be student members of your committee. As a student member they could respond via e-mail to questions about any aspect of Vassar from a prospective student or a member of your committee. Although the Office of Admission does have an "Ask a Current Vassar Student" section on the Admission website, prospective students frequently want to correspond with a student from their area or even with one who graduated from their high school.
- Ask current students to send you a quick response to questions such as: What do you like about Vassar? What would you like students from our area to know about Vassar? Describe a favorite course and/or professor.

You could then share these descriptions with your committee members so they feel "up to date" about the Vassar scene during the interview season.

Planning an Interview Day

If you have a large number of applicants in your area, consider planning an Interview Day to bring together students and alumni. Here are step-by-step instructions from Liza Prossnitz, Former Chairman of the Illinois Alumni Admission Program.

1. **Identify a date and place for the Interview Day.** Chicago holds theirs in late January at the professional offices of a committee member. Philadelphia and New York have used an independent school for several years. The Interview Day can be in February because interviewers complete their reports during the Interview Day. The chairman can then send the reports well before the end-of-February deadline.
2. **Send out an e-mail to recruit volunteers** about two months before Interview Day. Liza used the AAP committee list, Chicago Vassar Club board members, and suggestions from committee members and board members.
3. **Follow up on the e-mail responses.** Send a personal thank you to those who said they would participate. Follow up with those who did not respond. Liza used a second e-mail and then a phone call because some volunteers are eager to participate but are not diligent about checking their e-mail account. Liza said the more volunteers the better, but suggests having at least one volunteer for two applicants. This will give you enough people to serve as greeters, interviewers, and “extras” to handle whatever might come up.
4. **E-mail Regular Decision applicants to tell them that they will be part of your Interview Day.** List the date, location, and time for their interview. If you plan to have the event from 9:00 am until 1:00, schedule applicants at 9, 10, 11, and 12. There is no need to match the candidates with interviewers until they arrive for the interview. Ask each applicant to get back to you to confirm that s/he can come on the date and time of the event. You might want to schedule all the Regular Decision interview requests you receive in January for Interview Day.
5. **Send reminders** to all AAP volunteers and interviewees. It helps to send reminders three weeks before, one week before, and the day before the Interview Day.
6. **On Interview Day, put room numbers on the doors and set up the greeting and reception space.** It is helpful to have a desk where applicants can check in and be assigned to an interviewer. Be sure that you also have a separate space where interviewers can wait and write up their interview reports.
7. **Things to bring on Interview Day:**
 - Name tags
 - Coffee and donuts/coffee cake
 - Lunch for interviewers (sandwiches, pizza)
8. **Assign a new interview to a committee member after s/he has completed the previous interview report.** Definitely do not let interviewers go home until you have the interview report in hand.

Questions? Want more information? Here are other chairs who have conducted interview days:

- Ellen Hirsch, Chairman of the NYC Alumni Admission Program, ellenhirsch@earthlink.net
- David Rosenbaum, Chairman of the Philadelphia Alumni Admission Program, DRosenbaum@rawle.com