

**Vassar College
Alumni Admission
Ambassador Program**

**Volunteer
Handbook**

2008 – 2009

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Purpose of the Alumni Admission Ambassador Program

Alumni Admissions Program (AAP) volunteers help the Office of Admission increase the visibility of Vassar in their local community by:

- Connecting with students who have requested to be put in touch with Vassar alumni.
- Representing Vassar at local college fairs.
- Making congratulatory phone calls and emails to admitted and enrolled students.
- Working with their local Vassar club on receptions for admitted and enrolling students.

Through conversations with prospective students—particularly through one-on-one conversations or “interviews”—AAP volunteers:

- Offer a unique perspective for prospective students that only Vassar alumni 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 afford to visit the college.
- Provide a “personal touch” in the admissions process, setting an example of the personal attention that a student can expect from a Vassar education.
- Create a positive image of Vassar for students, and a community relations benefit when applicants share their positive impressions of Vassar with their family and friends.

Responsibilities of Admission Volunteers

Interviewing Applicants to the Freshman Class

Alumni Admission Program members conduct personal conversations with applicants to the freshman class. Your conversation can contribute significantly to our applicants’ fund of Vassar knowledge and make Vassar a more attractive college choice. Interview reports also add to our understanding of the strength of an applicant’s interest in Vassar.

Representing Vassar at College Fairs

Alumni Admission Program volunteers represent Vassar at local college fairs. Fairs heighten Vassar's visibility in the local area and offer a meaningful opportunity for personal interaction between enthusiastic Vassar alumni and local students.

Making Congratulatory Telephone Calls to Admitted Applicants

Admission volunteers help admitted students make informed college choices by sharing their enthusiasm, personal anecdotes, and factual information about Vassar. Naturally, volunteers will want to call the students they interviewed. In addition, we want AAP volunteers to call admitted students who did not request alumni interviews.

Welcoming Enrolling Students to the College

During May Alumni Admission Program committee members welcome enrolling students to the Vassar family. Many AAP committees share the names of other enrolling students and share information about local Vassar Club activities.

2008-2009 Calendar of AAP Activities

September	Alumni represent Vassar at local college fairs.
October	Alumni represent Vassar at local college fairs. AAP volunteers meet applicants for interviews.
November	Alumni represent Vassar at local college fairs. AAP volunteers meet applicants for interviews.
November 15	Early Decision (ED) Round I application deadline.
December 1	Last day to submit interview reports for ED Round I applicants.
December	Interviewing continues.
Late December	AAP volunteers congratulate admitted ED I students.
January 1	Early Decision, Round II application deadline. Regular Decision deadline.
January	Interviewing continues for Early Decision II and Regular Decision applicants.
January 19	Last day to submit interview reports for ED Round II applicants.
Early February	AAP volunteers congratulate admitted ED II students.
February	Interviewing continues for Regular Decision applicants.
February 27	Last day to submit interview reports for Regular Decision applicants.
End of March	Regular Decision letters mailed.
During April	Alumni congratulate students admitted to the freshman class.
April 16 and 19	Campus Open House Days for admitted students.
April 18-20	Focus on Vassar, a program for admitted students of color.
May 1	Deadline for students to select a college to attend in the fall.
July	Alumni Admission Program volunteers welcome enrolling students to the Vassar family.

Interviewing Applicants

The Role of the Alumni Interview

For applicants to Vassar, interviews are optional and are conducted by Vassar alumni around the world. The interview is a conversation that is more informative than it is evaluative. This 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 get information about a student's level of interest in Vassar.

A note about interview reports: Your interview reports become part of the candidate's file. However, because alumni 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 whether or not the applicant is academically prepared for Vassar, but to learn more about the student's interest in 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. The value of the interview report submitted for the candidate's file is to provide the Admissions Office with information that will help determine whether or not the student is a good match for Vassar. Any information on an applicant's qualities that might raise a concern in the mind of the interviewer are helpful to the admissions officer reading that file.

Interview Assignment Process

From October to late February, the Office of Admission will send interview requests to your AAP chairman who will then assign students to you. Please contact the applicants assigned to you as soon as you receive their contact information.

Select a few dates and times when you are available to conduct the interview. We recommend a comfortable, convenient, public place for a face-to-face interview, but you are welcome to do a phone interview if necessary.

If you cannot reach the applicant or if the applicant declines the interview, please check the appropriate box on interview report form.

Before the Interview

Before calling the applicant:

- **Select a few dates and times when you are available to conduct the interview.** The conversation with the prospective student usually takes three quarters of an hour.
- **Select a comfortable, convenient, public place for the interview.** You might consider a quiet coffee shop, a bookstore cafe, the applicant's high school, a library, or your office. In all cases, it is important to be sensitive to the feel of the interview site. Students (and their families) may feel uncomfortable about an interview at your home or apartment. If the applicant lives some distance from your home, it is entirely appropriate to ask the applicant to travel to your area; a conversation by phone is also a possibility.

Interviewing Tips

- Have a thoughtful conversation that touches on a wide range of topics.
- Feel free to share your experiences at Vassar and especially about what you have done with your Vassar degree after you graduated.
- Keep the purpose of the conversation in mind: to inspire a student to choose Vassar if he or she is admitted and to assess a student's level of interest in attending the College.
- Encourage applicants to call the admission office (845-437-7300 or 800-827-7270) if they have questions about the admission process or their chances of admission.

Conducting the Interview and Sample Questions

1. Greet the applicant. Introduce yourself and offer some information about you such as your Vassar major, your job, volunteer commitments, or other interests.
2. Assure the applicant that this is more of a conversation than an interview and that you welcome his/her.
3. Put the applicants at ease by asking questions, then connecting their answers to opportunities at Vassar and your own experiences. Sample questions include:
 - “Tell me about your favorite class/favorite teacher this year.”
 - “What is your favorite subject? Why?”
 - “What is your favorite extracurricular activity?”
 - “Which activities would you like to continue at Vassar? Are there new activities you would like to try?”
 - “How did you spend last summer? Did you have a job, travel, volunteer?”
 - “If you were to take a year off before enrolling in college, what would you do?”
 - “What interests you about Vassar?”
4. Offer to stay in touch. Give the applicant your name and contact information.

The thrust of your questions should help you discover the following:

1. An unusual circumstances--or “red-flags”—that might not come through on the student's application.
2. The level of interest a student has in Vassar.

Writing the Interview Report

On the interview report, you will be asked the following:

- Student's Name
- Student's Vassar ID (Number that starts with 999 on the rosters given to the chairs)
- Any information that the student shared that might not be on their application (Optional)
- Applicant's level of interest in Vassar:
Very Strong Strong Moderate Cannot Judge

Submitting Your Interview Report

Electronically

Submit it electronically by going to the Alumni Admission Program website at <http://admissions.vassar.edu/aap>. (There is no need to follow up with a paper copy.)

By Email

Email your report to vcaap@vassar.edu.

By Mail

Submit your report by mail to the Vassar Office of Admission, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604.

By Fax

Fax both sides of your report to 845-437-7063.

Representing Vassar at a College Fair

Preparing

1. Read the Vassar at a Glance 2008-2009 section of this handbook. Bring it to the fair.
2. Visit the following websites:
 - The Vassar website at www.vassar.edu.
 - The Admission website at admissions.vassar.edu.
 - The Alumni Admission Program website at admissions.vassar.edu/aap.
3. Look over the materials we will send you prior to the fair:
 - *Facts*, our general information brochure. Majors are listed on the back.
 - Prospect cards to be completed by those who want to be added to our mailing list.
 - Athletic brochure (reference copy): The Office of Athletics will send a copy of this brochure to students who check athletics on the prospect card.
 - Visitor's Guide (reference copy): Open your copy to the campus map. Sent to all juniors in early June to help families plan summer college trips.
 - Science brochure (reference copy): We send this brochure to students who check science on the prospect card.
 - The viewbook (reference copy): Seniors will get a copy along with their Vassar application.
 - Course Catalogue (reference copy)

Talking with students 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 inside *Facts*) provide a few facts about that major. Your response might include information about small, seminar style classes (average class size is 16), research opportunities, and internship possibilities offered by the field work office.
2. Encourage students to take *Facts* 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 admissions.vassar.edu or call us at 800-827-7270 for tour and information session times and for travel directions.
4. If you run out of cards, ask students to provide their names, complete 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 2008-2009 and the Frequently Asked Questions section of this handbook. If you can't find the answer, encourage the student to contact the Vassar Admission Office.

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 curriculum
- Attentive, teaching faculty; small seminar-style classes.
- 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.
- 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.
- Over 60% of students receive need-based financial aid. Please refer families to the financial aid section on the back page of *Just the Facts*.

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 call the sponsoring high school or organization and your local admission chair 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. Return it and the completed prospect cards to Maureen Norcross, Vassar Office of Admission, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604. You do not need to return extra brochures.

Congratulatory Phone Calls

Congratulatory phone calls from Alumni Admission Program volunteers to admitted students and welcoming phone calls to enrolling students 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 that 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. In some cases you may be asked to call an admitted student you do not know. To make all congratulatory calls 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 admission packet, 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 letters of admission. **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 definitely talk with the parents. Congratulate them on their daughter's or son'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 parents or the student have additional questions.

Vassar at a Glance 2008-2009

Overview

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

Extensive Academic Program

- Flexible curriculum
- See list of majors printed inside the *Facts* brochure.
- 32 departmental majors. Five most popular majors are English, the biological sciences, political science, psychology, and economics.
- 7 interdepartmental majors including Biochemistry, Neuroscience and Behavior, and Earth Science and Society.
- 12 multidisciplinary majors such as Africana Studies, American Culture, Environmental Studies, Cognitive Science, International Studies, Jewish Studies, Science, Technology, and Society, Women's Studies, and Urban Studies.
- Self-designed majors.
- Strong support for students interested in pre-med, pre-law, 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
 - Student-faculty ratio is 9:1
- Student/faculty collaborative research opportunities and independent study courses.
- Credit bearing internships (Field Work) offered by all academic departments. 60% elect Field Work in areas ranging from medicine, law, and the arts to journalism, advertising, the media, social service, and education.
- Extensive Study Away (Junior Year Abroad) programs elected by almost 40% of our juniors.

Information about Individual Departments and Majors

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

Diverse Student Body

- 26% are Students of Color.
- 60% from public schools, 40% from private and parochial schools.
- Students from all 50 states and 46 foreign countries.
- 60% of students receive need-based financial aid.
- Student body is 40% male and 60% female.

Strong Student Community

- Over 100 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, and debate team.
- 27 varsity 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 Rowing, M&W Soccer, M&W Squash, M&W Swimming and Diving, M&W Tennis, M&W Track, M&W Volleyball
- Equestrian and Rugby Club teams; many intramural teams.

Excellent Location

- Students have access to the resources in Poughkeepsie and throughout the Hudson Valley.
- New York offers academic, internship, and recreational opportunities.

Applying to Vassar

Vassar offered admission to 25% of the 7361 students who applied for admission to the Class of 2012.

Academic Expectations

- Rigorous college preparatory high school program with honors and advanced placement courses.
- The high school program should include four-year sequences in English, foreign language, history, mathematics, and science or a course of studies that is comparable in breadth and rigor to this program.
- Unweighted A, A-, and B+ grades in all college preparatory subjects; rank in the top 10 to 15 percent of the class if the high school ranks its students.
- Standardized tests:
 - American College Test (ACT).
Our average composite scores are in the 29 to 33 range. We require that students take the ACT writing test.
 - OR
 - SAT reasoning test and any two SAT subject tests. Middle 50% range for SAT combined critical reading, math, and writing scores for applicants admitted to the Class of 2012: 2040-2230.
- Strong analytical and writing skills. The average writing score on the SAT was 700.
- Evidence of academic commitment and passion.

Extracurricular and Leadership Expectations

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

Other Qualities

We look for strong indications that the applicant is well suited to Vassar. We may find evidence of the solid match in an applicant's essay, the guidance counselor and teacher recommendations, and the alumni interview report (if available).

Financial Aid

- Admission decisions are need-blind.
- Vassar meets 100% of demonstrated financial need. Vassar does not offer merit scholarships based on special academic, artistic, or athletic talent.
- Applicants submit the CSS PROFILE, Federal Application for Free Student Aid (FAFSA), and tax returns
- Helpful web sites:
 - www.admissions.vassar.edu: click on "Finances"
 - www.finaid.org: informative web site with numerous links to other financial aid sites.

Other Facts

- Vassar offers college credit for Advanced Placement exam results of 4 and 5.
- Vassar offers college credit 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 submit the Common Application with the Vassar Supplement (www.commonapp.org)
- Applicants may request an alumni interview when they submit the Vassar Supplement to the Common Application.

Need More Information?

Go to www.vassar.edu or send an e-mail to vcaap@vassar.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Vassar accept the Common Application?

Yes. Vassar uses Common Application exclusively.

Which departments are the best?

Each department has an impressive array of course offerings and many offer research opportunities. Many departments like biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, drama, film, and music have their own magnificently equipped buildings.

What are Vassar's 5 most popular majors?

Political science, psychology, English, economics, and the biological sciences.

Does Vassar have a core curriculum?

No. Our curriculum is rigorous but not rigid.

Does Vassar have required courses?

No, however, we do have some requirements to insure that students develop the skills they need to be successful at Vassar.

- The Freshman Seminar, a one-semester course offered in many disciplines, focuses on written and oral work.
- The quantitative requirement, a semester course in mathematics, natural sciences, psychology, statistics, or certain economics courses.
- The foreign language proficiency requirement: one year at the introductory level or one semester at the intermediate level. Students may test out of the requirement.

How are the sciences at Vassar?

Vassar has exceptional course offering 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.

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 Field Work program. More than a quarter of our students elect internships annually 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.

How can I find out more about Vassar?

Visit our website at www.vassar.edu.