



ARCHIMEDEAN
UPPER CONSERVATORY

College Application Counselor Recommendation Letter Student Questionnaire

"To kindle the art of thinking through the unique teaching of advanced mathematics and the Greek language."

Even though you may not be able to see your letters, YOU play an incredibly important role in helping us pen the best letters possible on your behalf!

Please fill out this form by typing your answers into the spaces provided using Adobe Reader. Do not handwrite.

Adobe Reader is available free for download at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

STUDENT INFORMATION

Full Name _____

Student I.D. # _____

E-mail Address _____

COUNSELOR LETTER OVERVIEW

- ◆ Whereas teacher letters highlight the unique aspects and abilities of a student as seen through interactions and achievements in the classroom, the counselor letter serves to capture the larger picture of where you come from, who you are, and what you are capable of.
- ◆ Counselor letters serve to highlight your collective achievements in and also out of the classroom, your talents and special skills, your growth as a student and person, your contributions to your family, school, and community, your ability to overcome obstacles and hardships, your work ethic and level of drive, your unique personality traits and demeanor, your potential to be a successful college student and more as displayed throughout your high school years and lifetime.
- ◆ One counselor letter will be written on behalf of each senior. To do so, A.U.C.'s College Office will be relying heavily on personal interactions with and observations of you as your Counselor and Teacher, as well as faculty input, your official College Resume, and Questionnaires such as this one.
- ◆ Understand that, to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the message, letters of recommendation are highly confidential. **No student or family member will be granted permission to review, alter, or access the content of any recommendation letter.**

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

- ◆ Answer each the following questions with as much detail as possible. **TAKE TIME TO REALLY THINK ABOUT YOUR ANSWERS! The more information you provide, the better we can help make the strongest possible case for your acceptance.**
- ◆ If there is any topic you wish not to share with College Admissions' Offices or A.U.C.'s College Office, you are not forced to do so. If you don't mind sharing a specific piece of information with your Counselors here at A.U.C., but are unsure if this information is beneficial to share with a College Admission's Office, please make a note of that in your answer so we can discuss the matter further.
- ◆ Once you have completed this questionnaire, you will upload this PDF document to Archie based on your Counselor's instructions.

The extra effort elaborating and providing quality responses really does make a difference, aiding us in writing a powerful, detail-rich, illuminating counselor letter of recommendation.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

- a. How do you feel you handled the transition into A.U.C. from middle school or your previous high school? What were you good at and where did you struggle? What did you do to correct any initial mistakes made or frustrations encountered?

b. **Describe** the specific ways you feel **ready to handle** the many adult responsibilities that await you once you transition into an intellectually-vivacious, multidimensional, accountability-filled college, professional, and private life?

c. **Describe** the particular or unique ways you believe yourself able to **contribute** more substantively, differently, and/or effectively - compared to many others - to the productivity, discoveries, engagements, and intellectual pursuits taking place on college campuses? *Attach additional sheets as needed to discuss in detail these personal characteristics and why you believe each is, in and of itself, a super power that will help you not only meet, but potentially exceed the expectations your future college will have for you.*

2. Though we are all born with certain personalities, likes/dislikes, and natural proclivities, our life experiences help shape who we become. Let's reflect on those impactful experiences at Archimedean and in your personal life that resulted in positive growth, focusing on **what these experiences were and how these moment have helped make you a stronger and more capable, confident, talented, passionate, contributing college and community member** than you think you may have been otherwise.

a. **Identify and describe** those experiences or moments related to A.U.C.'s unique and challenging as well as balanced and interdisciplinary curriculum that led to noticeable personal evolution. Then, **for EACH, list and elaborate** on the skills, character traits, talents, types of knowledge, perspectives, awarenesses, values and more that you feel you gained or honed as a result of those experiences and moments. *Attach additional sheets as needed to discuss in detail these key catalysts one by one, when/ how they occurred, and the strength(s) and values they each helped you develop.*

b. **Identify and describe** those experiences or moments related to being a member of Archimedean's more close-knit community that led to noticeable personal evolution. Then, **for EACH, list and elaborate** on the skills, traits, talents, types of knowledge, perspectives, awarenesses, values and more that you feel you gained or honed as a result of those experiences and moments. *Attach additional sheets as needed to discuss in detail these key catalysts one by one, when/how they occurred, and the strength(s) and values they each helped you develop.*

c. **Identify and describe** those experiences or moments in your personal life - *outside of school and academics* - on your own, with friends, family, others near and far etc - that you feel have especially prepared you to better engage with, navigate through, and contribute to your future communities and your many pursuits, in and out of college, in the years ahead. Then, **for EACH**, **list** and **elaborate** on the skills, traits, talents, types of knowledge, perspectives, awarenesses, values and more that you feel you gained or honed as a result of those experiences and moments. *Attach additional sheets as needed to discuss in detail these key catalysts, one by one, when they occurred, and the strength(s) and values they each helped you develop.*

3. a. Given what **you** have reflected on so far about yourself, what are the three best-fitting positive adjectives you would use to describe yourself?

What are your **reasons** for your picks?

- b. Educate us about your **most endearing flaw** and how you feel it is an obstacle at times, but also an asset in other situations?

4. a. Different people often see different strengths in ourselves. Ask a **parent or an adult family member** who knows you very well what three positive adjectives they would use to describe you?

Why do they feel these descriptors fit you well?

- b. Pick a **close friend or two** to interview next. What three positive adjectives they would use to describe you?

Why do they feel these descriptors fit you well?

- c. Pick one of your past or current secondary-school **teachers**. What three positive adjectives would they use to describe you?

Why do they feel these descriptors fit you well?

5. If applicable, **when and in what ways**, loud or subtle, in school, in your family, and/or in your greater communities, have you displayed **leadership** or acted as a **role model**. *Attach a separate sheet if needed to share all relevant details related to particular situations and/or activities.*

6. If applicable, **when** and **in what ways** have you displayed **teamwork**.

7. If applicable, **when** and **in what ways** have you displayed **independence** or **self-reliance** or **self-sufficiency**.

8. a. Realities differ for everyone, some individuals are dealing with or have faced complexities, obstacles, hardships, or additional responsibilities that others may not have had to deal with. What conditions, changes, or situations occurred in your high school years (**or prior**) that have influenced you, your wellbeing, or your participation in the classroom/extracurricular activities/overall academic performance? **Describe these as much as you feel comfortable sharing.** (Examples may include illness, deaths, births, moves, divorce, marriage, daily travel time to school, financial strains, family responsibilities, personal realizations, etc...). *Attach additional sheets to elaborate if needed.*

b. **How** did or have these factors affect you and/or loved ones? *Attach additional sheets to elaborate if needed.*

c. **What** have you learned from or become better at because of these experiences?

d. **What else** do you want admissions' officers to know about you and your life today and your journey, goals, and dreams ahead?

9. Let's identify additional large or small, but **memorable, meaningful successes** in your life that **you** feel most proud of yourself for.
a. **Describe** in detail **two to three** such major Personal (non-academic) Accomplishments. **Elaborate** on **why** you are so proud of **EACH** of these achievements. (These can relate to personal goals attained or projects completed - from starting a successful business to training for the marathon or helping support your family financially to running a successful fundraising campaign -, making a difference in the lives' lives, being a change maker, displays of cultural intelligence, work/volunteering/relationship milestones, fears or obstacles overcome, displays of integrity, sound judgement, social conscientiousness, creativity, problem solving, passion, collaboration, concern, empathy, quick or critical thinking etc, standing up for what you believe in, defending another in need, and so so much more!) *Attach additional sheets as needed to elaborate on the timelines and your goals, ideas, initiatives, roles, decisions made, and outcomes produced.*

b. What do you feel these accomplishments say about you?

c. **Describe** in detail two to three such major Intellectual or Academic Accomplishments. **Elaborate** on why you are so proud of **EACH** these achievements in particular. *(These can relate to your most impressive or fulfilling intellectual/brainy or academic-subject-related achievements attained in a course, school/class-related individual or group project, academic competition, summer program, research work, personal projects -from reading all the works by Shakespeare to achieving fluency in a new language - that resulted from your intense curiosity, persistence, willingness to take intellectual risks, open-mindedness, creativity of thought, out-of-the-box thinking, grit, resilience, passion, determination, collaboration and organizational skills, personal initiatives, ideas, explorations, studies, questioning of knowledge, and so much more). Attach additional sheets as needed to elaborate on the challenges faced, approaches taken, efforts put in, and outcomes attained.*

d. What do you feel these accomplishments say about you?

10. a. If you didn't share already, have you ever organized and run any **personal/community project, business, nonprofit organization, or other independent initiative** that were not part of a school assignment or family-led endeavor? If so, **elaborate** on where your idea(s) or interests came from, how you got the organization started, when you first began this project, how the project evolved or grew if applicable, what your responsibilities and roles include(d), and any important or meaningful work engaged in and accomplishments achieved. *Attach additional details as needed if the space below is not enough.*

b. If you did not share already, have you founded any **official, school-approved school club, organization, or team** or helped lead a **preexisting official student club, organization, or team**. If so, **elaborate** on where your idea(s) or interests came from for this new initiative **or why** you decided to join and help lead this preexisting initiative, in what grade you founded, joined, or took over helping lead this initiative, and any important or meaningful work engaged in and specific accomplishments you or the group achieved and when. *Attach additional details as needed if the space below is not enough.*

11. a. Let's reflect on the coursework you've taken over the last few years. Which course(s) have you genuinely **enjoyed most** or **felt most fulfilled by** in high school? **Why?** *Try to dig deep and avoid superficial, cliché, or generic answers.*

b. If you didn't touch upon this already, were there any topics in this/these course(s) that you were especially drawn to? **Elaborate.**

- c. If you didn't touch upon this already, was there any specific independent or group work in this/these course(s) that you especially excelled at or learned from? **Elaborate.**
- d. If you didn't touch upon this already, where there any memorable discussions in this/these course(s) you engaged in, felt invigorated by, or that impacted your perspectives about particular topics? **Elaborate.**
- e. If you didn't touch upon this already, what skills to you feel you gained or perfected through your participation in this/these course(s)?
12. If any course(s) in high school felt especially challenging, what steps, if any, did **you** take to overcome your specific difficulties, learn from your missteps, and improve or grow stronger in your academic performance in that class or in other rigorous classes you faced thereafter?
13. Intellectually-stimulation experiences are those experiences that challenge your mind to think more deeply, carefully, creatively, and critically about one or more topics, encouraging intellectual growth, curiosity, the questioning of pre-held assumptions or beliefs, the exploration of new ideas and perspectives, and/or the seeking out of innovative solutions. These experiences revolve around **fully** engaging in readings, conversations, analyses and thought exercises, challenging cognitive tasks (the latter including puzzles and problem-solving activities, and alike).
- a. **Describe in detail a few of your most intellectually-stimulating experiences** in recent years (mainly high school years).
- b. **How** did they impact you?
- c. **Why** do you feel they were so invigorating?
14. Based on your experiences so far and your reflections on what has aided or distracted you from achieving your best and engaging fruitfully, what kind of **college classroom environment, activities, and approaches** do you believe will push you to be **most** successful academically?
15. How would you evaluate your contribution to and/or enhancement of **classroom discussions**?

16. Besides what you have already shared, are there any other moments in your life that you feel impacted your positive growth? This growth can relate to, for example, your career interests, new life approaches learned, personality/character evolutions, enhancement of skills and talents, changes in the values you hold, the discovery of hobbies you especially like etc. If there is more you wish to share, **describe the circumstances that instigated your evolution and elaborate on how this growth has manifested itself in your life.**
17. Healthy communities are made up of a whole host of varied individuals with different career, social, and person interests, life goals, and community engagements.
- a. Some community members can be described as changemakers. **A changemaker takes deliberate action to solve a social problem or dismantle a societal injustice.** Changemaking involves empathy, thoughtfulness, creativity, initiating action, and collaborative leadership etc. Changemakers are visionaries with the ability to see the impossible as possible. They understand that bringing out social change may be hard, yet they remain clear-eyed, hard-nosed, and opportunity focused, believing that through shared values and shared purpose, radical, transformational change is not only possible, but inevitable. Changemakers exist in many forms: Resisters, Networkers, Nurturers, Investigators, Communicators, and Builders. If you feel the word describes you today or will relate to your future self, why do you describe yourself as such or how do you hope to be a changemaker in the future? **Elaborate** on what you wish to tackle and improve upon, and how you are making or plan to make a difference in the future? *Attach additional details as needed if the space below is not enough.*
- b. Some community members might consider themselves **innovators, out-of-the-box or resourceful thinkers**, and/or **problem solvers**. Would you describe yourself as a problem solver, out-of-the-box or resourceful thinker, or an innovator at heart? If so, how do these aspects of you manifest themselves in your every day activities, interests, or thought processes? Provide **examples** that showcase moments when you were innovative, an out-of-the-box or resourceful thinker, or a problem solver.
- c. Some community members might consider themselves **creatives** and/or **deep thinkers**. Would you describe yourself as creative in thought and/or action or a person who enjoys contemplating and dissecting ideas in some way? Please **elaborate** and **describe** how these aspects of you showcase themselves.
18. a. Diversity is reflected throughout society. In what ways has the **diversity you represent**, which can refer numerous identities, perspectives, and influences, including race/ethnicity, cultural background/ancestry, family/community traditions, gender, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, and so much more influenced the person you are today, how you approach the world, or what you value, nurture, or are attentive to and care about?
- b. What **strengths** do you feel you possess because of you and your family/community's unique diversity?
- c. Have you ever felt that you've faced **obstacles** because of any aspect of the diversity you represent? Please **elaborate** if you feel comfortable doing so. Be sure to also discuss how you have worked to overcome these obstacles.

19. Elaborate on the ways your off-campus **summer activities or community involvements** have augmented your awareness, informed your perspectives, and influenced your interests and views of yourself or others.
20. a. What are your current **career goals**?
- b. How are these goals shaping your **choices of possible college majors**?
21. a. **What** hobby/hobbies, if any, do you engage in regularly whenever time permits (*during the school year or when on break*)?
- b. **How** did you get introduced to or become interested in each of your hobbies?
- c. If you had to analyze your enjoyment more carefully, **what** do you like about each of your hobbies and **why**?
22. How do you hope to be able to spend any free, downtime between classes and studying when in college? **Describe** those activities you would find most relaxing, fun, engaging, fulfilling, enriching etc...and **why**.
23. If you had to describe to your future roommates or college classmates how you will enrich their college experience, influence their learning and views, and provide meaningful socio-emotional support, what would you say?
24. Do you have any **hidden talents** or **funny quirks** we may not know about? (*Ex: You are an avid juggler, an amazing cook, a spoken-word poet, an ant expert, an effective salsa teacher, a photography lover...*)
25. Is there an event/character/historical figure/book/film/movement that has **impacted you** significantly, changing your way of thinking or being? **Explain**.
26. a. **If you have not always lived in the U.S.**, explain where you were born and when /at what age you moved to the U.S..
- b. Where did you first settle in the U.S. when you immigrated to this country and how did your family end up settling in Miami-Dade?

c. **If you grew up in the U.S., but you did not always grow up in South Florida**, please explain where you grew up and when, / at what age, you moved to Miami-Dade.

d. If you feel comfortable sharing, elaborate on the **circumstances and reasons** that led you and your family to move to the U.S. from abroad or to down to South Florida from elsewhere in the U.S.?

e. If relevant to your family realities, what **hardships or obstacles** did your parents/family face when deciding to and after actually moving here? If these hardships persist, elaborate as well on what you feel comfortable sharing.

f. If you were old enough to remember, what were **your first impressions** of the U.S. - *if you moved from abroad* - or of Miami-Dade - *if you moved from within the U.S. to South Florida* - compared to the region you moved from?

g. If you were old enough to remember, what was your **transition** into your new life here in South Florida like? What thrilled you? What scared you? What challenges did you face? Which opportunities did you lose and which did you gain?

h. If you were old enough to remember, what specific **actions and behaviors**, if any, did **you** engage in that enhanced and/or harmed the ease of your acclimatization to this new area of residence and its culture?

i. Now that you can look back and reflect more maturely, consider the ways in which the experience of moving here impact you longer term. **How** do you feel your perspective, awareness, skills, understanding, passions, interests etc changed?

In what ways have the changes you listed above manifested themselves in your life, relationships, involvements, initiatives, goals, and achievements in more recent years? *Attach additional sheets as needed to discuss what aspects of yourself and your actions / goals have been influenced by your experience moving and how you feel those changes have been evident in your involvement, accomplishments, decisions, way of being etc.*

27. a. Did **your parent(s)** attend **high school in the U.S.**? If not, where did they complete their high school education?

b. If your parent(s) attended high school **outside of the U.S.**, elaborate on any challenges or benefits, if any, you feel you have experienced, compared to other classmates, throughout middle and/or high school, and in your ongoing preparations to build a strong resume and to apply to college.

28. a. Has/have your parent(s) completed any college-level education, **even if abroad**? If one (or more parent) has, please elaborate as well on what country he/she/they studied in, what level of education he/she/they reached, and what field of study he/she/they completed?
- b. Will you be the first in your immediate family - among your parents and siblings - to attend a four-year college or university **in the U.S.**? **Explain.**
- c. Though every admissions office can choose to define slightly differently what is a **First-Generation College Applicant**, usually being a “first-gen” student means that your **parent(s)** did **not** complete at least a **four-year** college or university (bachelors) degree, regardless of other family member's level of education. If your parents took a few college classes, but did not graduate with a degree, or even completed community college (with an Associates degree), you will often be considered first generation still. Actually, more and more colleges and universities are even beginning to consider students with parents, who graduated with bachelors or higher degrees from international universities, as first-gen applicants.
- If you believe you are about to be a **First-Generation (College) Student**, what does being the first to attend college (or first to attend college in the U.S.) in your immediate family mean to **you**?

Why are you chasing a different educational path than that of your parents?

In what specific way(s) do you **value** the educational experiences and opportunities you are aiming to pursue?

29. Whether your parents finished elementary, middle, and high school or not, and attended college or not - *in the U.S. or abroad* -, how do you feel that your parents' educational experiences, levels of education completed, and understandings of the college admissions process in the U.S. **helped or hindered** your ability to set academic goals for yourself, succeed in school, achieve curricular and extracurricular successes, and be ready to gain admission to college? **Explain.**
30. a. Any disciplinary record accumulated in high school must be divulged to admissions' offices. If you were involved in any disciplinary incident(s) for which you were officially written up, state what grade(s) you got into trouble during.
- b. Describe **what happened** and what you were written up for.
- c. **Elaborate** on what you learned and **how** you changed as a consequence of your troubles.
- d. Did you design and engage in any follow-up activities after your indiscretion(s) in order to help other students avoid the same trouble or mistakes you did? **Explain.**

***** If there is anything else that you feel would be helpful, but was not asked about, or if you feel you needed more space to elaborate further on a question, please attached a typed page with additional information.**

PANDEMIC-SPECIFIC ADDENDUM

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted all our lives. Your feedback on your related experiences can give AUC's College Office greater insight into how the pandemic affected you. While answering below, feel free to use the questions posed as springboards for providing any related or additional information you feel would be helpful for AUC's College Office to know.

31. a. In response to the pandemic, classes continued at Archimedean Upper Conservatory live, though online in Zoom, throughout the spring of 2020. For over 90% of our high school students, this synchronous online remote learning continued throughout the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021, only about ~20 A.U.C. students attending hybrid classes in person during the 2020-2021 school year, all students returning to in person learning the 2021-2022 school year. The pandemic started when you were in the spring of 7th grade. Describe your home learning environment during remote learning in the spring of 2020. Explain, if at any time, your home environment posed any obstacles to you while you tried to follow your classes online, complete your homework, and/or keep studying and learning?
- b. Describe your school experience for the following 2020-2021 school year (your 8th grade year). How did the pandemic affect your classes, ability to learn, peer interactions etc? Did you attend classes in person or online? Were you interacting with your teachers "live" every day if online or were you given work to complete asynchronously offline? Explain, if at any time, your home environment throughout 8th grade posed any obstacles to you while you tried to follow your classes online or in person, complete homework, and/or keep studying and learning?
- c. What actions, if any were possible, did you take to **overcome** or **minimize** the negative effects of any obstacles experienced in late 7th and/or throughout 8th grade during the heaviest days of the pandemic?
- d. Did your **home environment** provide any **benefits** to you while you tried following your classes online, complete your homework, and/or keep studying and learning?
- e. Elaborate on any other **pros and cons** you experienced of when and if you engaged in online/remote, hybrid, or in person learning during the pandemic period.
32. We know our students often engage in enrichment activities over the summer months to build their resumes, for personal growth, for fun, for family bonding, for community engagement, and much more. How did the pandemic **affect or alter** your plans, if at all, in the Summer of 2020, Summer of 2021, and/or Summer 2022? Discuss each separately.
33. If specific plans or parts of plans were affected, **what did you do** to make up for any changes or cancellations in your original summer plans during 2020, 2021, and/or 2022? The more details shared for each summer the better as these can reveal how you still sought to be productive, grow, influence, help, build hobbies, strengthen talents, explore passions despite limitations and difficulties each summer.

34. Despite the upheaval caused by the pandemic, you may have found ways, without putting yourself in harms' way, **to help or have an impact on others** you are close to (friends, family, and/or neighbors) and/or those in your many communities (local groups and/or distant ones). If this is true for you, please explain exactly how you contributed to and/or impacted those around you in any way, little or big. Breakdown your answer by summer - Summer 2020, Summer 2021, Summer 2022. *The more details you can provide the better as these can give us insight into your character, values, and motivations.*
35. The pandemic and the forced disruption to our normal interactions and activities may have helped you **personally grow and/or gain new awarenesses, skills, insights, values, and more**. If this is true for you, no matter how small or big, please do share your story.
36. With the cancellation of many initial plans, the requirement to engage in social distancing, and many public spaces being closed down, the pandemic may have afforded you **extra time to explore certain old or new personal interests, hobbies, passions, and enjoyable past times** that you would not have had time to delve into as much or at all otherwise. Does this statement apply to you? If it does, describe how this relates to each of the the Summers of 2020, of 2021, and/or of 2022. *The more specifics you can provide the better.*
37. For some, unfortunately, not all or any of your extra time was able to be spent on fun or personal enrichment pursuits. Some of you had **new or larger responsibilities and worries to take on and deal with**. If you feel comfortable sharing and feel this is important for admissions offices to know about, **explain** any big or small stressors, worries, losses, and/or responsibilities you faced and/or continue to face since then. *Make your time line clear.*