Thin Envelope v. Thick Envelope

The prevalent belief is that a thick envelope means good news; a thin envelope doesn’t. Well, with this year’s Early Action freshman admissions cycle at Saint Mary’s that isn’t the case. We have been mailing out our acceptances in “thin” envelopes; the “thick envelope” containing an acceptance packet with information about policies and procedures for the coming months (campus events; housing; confirming admission) is going to follow in early January. Of course, not all thin envelopes will contain acceptances. Some thin envelopes will advise students that we are glad that they applied, but we’d like to see some additional information to determine whether they are sufficiently prepared to be successful at Saint Mary’s. The admissions vernacular is that this is a “refer to regular” letter. What that means is that we would like to see your seventh semester grades and or your most recent ACT or SAT scores and will then consider you with those applying for Regular Admission Consideration (January 15, 2015 deadline.) Now every year we get calls from students (or their parents) claiming that they were denied who have been referred to regular decision, when that’s not the case. A letter staying we are looking for more information means that your decision is pending the receipt of more information; it doesn’t represent a denial. Many students will send us seventh semester grades indicating that they are enjoying great academic success and then we’ll send them regular admissions letters shortly afterwards. However, some students who have uneven performance will end up either offered positions on our waiting list or denied. Unfortunately, there will be some students whose thin envelopes will have denial letters enclosed. When we send early action applicants a denial letter it means that we don’t believe the student is sufficiently prepared to be successful at Saint Mary’s College and that we don’t believe there is sufficient time in high school for them to acquire the needed foundation for success. We promise early action students a decision will be mailed before the end of December and if we don’t think they are prepared to enroll next fall we believe it’s important to let them know now so that they can proceed with other plans. Denied students are invited to visit to develop a plan for later admission after enrolling this fall at another college.

Now, please know that we aren’t done with our early action processing yet. Many letters are in the mail, but many have yet to be sent. Currently we have 15% more students having applied for early action, so we’re going to be working right up to our break for Christmas. Please know that all completed early action applications will receive decisions before December 31. We can’t, however, make a decision if parts of your application were missing on December 1. It was our promise to admit those whose applications were completed by that date and those are our priority. Other applications will be reviewed in the new year as they become complete.

Please remember that financial applications cannot be submitted until after January 1, 2015. Some students, advised that they are getting merit scholarships, have contacted us
about the possibility of more financial aid. Our deadline for need based financial aid applications based upon the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are due by February 15 in order to receive priority financial aid consideration. You can apply in January, however, and we'll begin mailing financial aid applications to applicants on a rolling basis, beginning in mid-February. Please remember to also look at the array of additional scholarship opportunities for students interested in specific Saint Mary's majors. Two important dates to remember are January 24, 2015, aka Audition Saturday (for those interested in scholarship opportunities for those majoring or minoring in Dance, Theater/Performance, Technical Theater, and Music, or February 21 (Scholarship Saturday) for myriad other opportunities:

http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/undergraduate/scholarships#departmentscholarship

http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/undergraduate/scholarships#maps

Please remember, if you are accepted, that all acceptances are provisional and contingent upon the successful completion of your coursework in progress and high school graduation. So, keep in mind we’re going to require your final transcript and to maintain your acceptance we expect you to complete your courses and to perform with similar or better grades than the academic record you submitted with your application. So, keep kicking it throughout your senior year!