

## Countdown to College Checklist Seniors 09/10

### Keep the following in mind when planning:

- Develop and maintain good study habits.
- Learn how to plan effectively.
- Get into the habit of saving money.
- Ask questions when you need to---of parents, teachers and guidance counselors.

### Grade 12: Fall

\_\_\_ Make sure your coursework meets high school graduation and college admissions requirements and is appropriate for college/career interests.

\_\_\_ Talk to your guidance counselor about your plans for college; evaluate those plans in light of your SAT/ACT scores and high school grades.

\_\_\_ Discuss financial aid possibilities for in a conference with your guidance counselor and your parents.

\_\_\_ Request application materials for admissions and financial aid from schools of interest, if you have not done so already.

\_\_\_ If requesting Early Action or Early Decision college admission, be sure to submit application materials by the deadline.

\_\_\_ Visit the schools you are seriously considering to confirm your top choices. Make arrangements in advance for a personal interview with an admissions counselor, a financial aid administrator, and a professor in the academic department representing your intended major. Stay overnight, if possible.

\_\_\_ Depending on your SAT or ACT scores, discuss re-taking with your guidance counselor.

\_\_\_ Be aware of an admission and financial aid application deadlines and meet them. **Don't procrastinate.** Keep accurate record of all applications and supporting materials you submit.

\_\_\_ Devote time, energy, and thought to writing and re-writing any required essays.

\_\_\_ Give recommendation forms to teachers, counselors, and other persons from whom you are seeking a reference at least a month before they are due to be returned. Follow-up with your references to make sure they have remembered to send them.

\_\_\_ If seeking appointment to a military academy, make sure your file is current and in the possession of the persons or organizations from whom you are seeking a nomination.

\_\_\_ If seeking an athletic scholarship send a copy of your game schedule to the appropriate coaches; ask your high school coaches about contacts they may have.

\_\_\_ If portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent are required for admission or for scholarships, finalize them.

### Grade 12: Winter

\_\_\_ Submit your family's financial information on the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** on or as soon after January 1 as possible. Your guidance counselor can tell you if the schools you are applying to require additional financial aid forms.

\_\_\_ If the financial aid processor requests additional financial information in order to process your application, submit it promptly.

\_\_\_ Confirm that all school admissions application materials, including recommendations, have been sent on schedule.

\_\_\_ Request that your high school sends a copy of your transcript, including first semester senior grades to schools you've applied to.

\_\_\_ Review your **Student Aid Report (SAR)** for accuracy. If necessary, correct inaccurate items on the SAR and return it to the FAFSA processor. If you had a college transmit your FAFSA data directly to the CPS, you must notify the school of any changes or corrections. When a corrected SAR is returned to you, review it once more and then if correct, place all parts of the SAR in your financial aid file.

\_\_\_ If the school requests you're SAR, submit it promptly. Do this even if the SAR says you are *not* eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant, as the school may be able to offer you other aid based on the information in that report.

\_\_\_ If the schools you are applying to require additional application forms for financial aid or request copies of your family's income tax returns for verification, submit them immediately.

\_\_\_ **Continue to seek and apply for private scholarships.**

## **Grade 12: Spring**

\_\_\_ Make your final decision about which college you will attend. Notify the college of your choice in writing by the appropriate deadline. Decline; in writing, other offers of admission (other students may be waiting for that place in the freshman class).

\_\_\_ Review your financial aid award letter with your parents; be sure that you understand the terms and conditions that apply to each type of aid offered.

\_\_\_ Sign your financial aid award letter and any other items requiring your signature and return them. Schedule an appointment with the college's financial aid administrator if you have questions or wish to discuss the contents of your award letter. If a personal visit is not possible, call the financial aid office and ask for an extension of time so that you can make up your mind.

\_\_\_ Notify the financial aid office if you receive any outside scholarships, grants, or other kinds of student aid.

\_\_\_ If you have received financial aid award letters from schools whose offers of enrollment or aid you have decided to decline, notify the aid office in writing (other students who wish to attend that school will need the aid).

\_\_\_ Complete separate application forms for any loan funds that require such application; understand all of your rights and responsibilities *before* you and /or your parents sign a promissory note.

\_\_\_ Arrange with the school for housing and a meal plan, if necessary.

\_\_\_ Understand when tuition, fees and room and board are actually due. Be sure you understand how your financial aid will be disbursed and whether you can defer bill payment until the funds are available.

\_\_\_ Be aware of any summer orientation sessions that you must attend at the chosen school; and make plans accordingly.

\_\_\_ Apply for a summer job.

## **Graduate From High School!**

\_\_\_ Continue to talk with your family about college expenses that financial aid will not cover. Investigate tuition payment plans that the school may offer or accept.

\_\_\_ Make a plan for saving a portion of your summer earnings.

\_\_\_ Prepare a proposed budget for your freshman year in college---see our Student Financial Success Guide which includes an interactive budget worksheet.

\_\_\_ If a Federal Work Study opportunity is part of your aid package, remember that it may be your responsibility to find an appropriate job. You will need to follow up with the financial aid office as soon as you arrive on campus.

\_\_\_ Return any additional materials your school requires on time.