



Junior Newsletter

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MAY

Almost there!

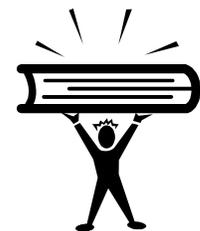
As juniors turn the corner for the homestretch of their high school careers, it is important to plan for the future NOW. It is hard to imagine, but graduation will be here before you know it. As you enter your final high school summer, here are some key items to accomplish heading into next year.

- TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT YOUR POST SECONDARY PLANS. Parent support is a valuable ingredient to post secondary success. Each graduate will go their own separate way after high school. It is important to be on the same page with your parents and pursue your goals. Will you be entering the work force, college, military? Each choice follows a similar path.
- Update your resume
- Get a part time job if you do not already have one.
- Make time to do what you love or continue with your current hobbies.
- Have you started visiting colleges if this is your path? There are many different college opportunities and it is a very expensive decision, so make sure you do your homework.
- There are many skill related fields that offer a great career opportunities that do not require a 4 year degree. Do not discount something because it does not require a degree.
- Put forth your best effort and be true to yourself!



Finish your Junior year strong!

Typically your junior year grades are going to be the last set of grades that a college admissions counselor will see upon making an acceptance decision. So make sure that you keep your grades as high as possible and STUDY! The cumulative GPA that they see are also from the end of your junior year!



College Visits



Why Visit?

Would you buy a house by just looking at pictures? Never, so you should not do the same with a college. You will be spending the next four or more years at the school (or in the area), so you want to get a feel of where you are going to be living.

Students (and families) should visit colleges to get first hand information about a school. Brochures and the internet are excellent sources of information, but remember, they only show the “best” views and the students posing for the pictures are always smiling! By seeing the campus in person gives you the overall picture of what the campus is like on a day-to-day basis. Do the pictures and websites give an accurate view of the campus?

Secondly, by visiting a campus, you should try and schedule an appointment for a tour or to speak with an admissions official. This will give you face to face contact and show them that you have a true interest in their school. This will also give you a contact person in the future if you have any questions.



When should you visit?

Students and families should begin college visitation during their junior year. As stated in a previous newsletter, we have a plethora of colleges in the area that fit all categories of colleges. Even if you do not have a list made up yet, visit a few just to get an idea of what a college campus is like and which type of campus you prefer. This may help with generating a list.

For students that have already begun to generate a list, you are a step ahead of the game. The environment of a school is a key component. Students should like the look of their school, the type of students they see, and should be able to smile each day when they walk out of their dorm room or apartment.

It is also recommended to try and visit schools while they are in session. This way, you get a try feel of how a school is on a typical day. Do you see yourself fitting in with the students that you see walking around campus? Can you envision yourself sitting in one of the classrooms? Also, summer is a convenient time to visit, but you may not get the true feel, because most students are not around campus. But visiting in the summer is better than no at all. If you like it in the summer, go back in the fall when school is in session.

How long should I visit a college?

There are many variables when answering this question, such as: How high is this school on my list? Am I scheduled to visit with an admissions rep? Do I want to meet with a person from my major? Do I have a tour scheduled?

Depending upon the size of a school, you should be at a school for at least half a day. You do not just want to take a walk through of the campus and then go home. Tours are nice because they can answer many questions and also inform you about things regarding the campus that you can not see, such as activities, events, attitudes, etc. Be aware that the tour guides are students paid by the school and almost always only give you the “good stuff.” If you want to know an answer with no strings attached, ask random students standing around talking or in the student lounges. It may be uncomfortable, but the value for their responses far outweighs the embarrassment!

Make sure that on your visit you take advantage of the time that you are there. Go prepared (tips on next page!) and do not leave until everything is checked off. If you want to make the most educated and complete decision, get everything you need. Depending upon how far away the school is, you may not be able to go back.



Preparation for a college visit

When visiting colleges, you want to get the most out of your visit. By being prepared, not only will it show your interest and impress school officials, you will cover all areas and get the important information needed in order to make a decision.

- Make a list of information that you want to find out during the visit. Lists of possible questions appear on the next page.
- Contact each school that you plan to visit to set up tours/interviews/informational sessions. Some schools fill up fast, so call well in advance. You may want to call to confirm if you have a meeting with a school official.
- Determine how many schools you are going to visit during your trip. Will it be a day trip or multiple days?
- Research the area so that you arrive on time and do not get lost or stuck in traffic.
- Set up travel accommodations before leaving, such as hotel reservations.
- Prepare to dress appropriately, especially if you are meeting with an admissions representative or faculty member. You want to look nice, yet comfortable...remember, you will be doing a lot of walking around campus.



College Visits

What do you do on a visit?

- ⇒ Go on an official school tour
- ⇒ Walk around campus on your own (visit the places that were not included on the tour!)
- ⇒ Informal interview with admissions officer (some schools may not offer this, but will have an informational session in which you will be able to cover much of the same questions and information gathering)
- ⇒ Meet a professor in the department if you are interested in a specific major
- ⇒ Sit in a college class (schedule before visit)
- ⇒ Talk with students (they will typically be very honest and not give you the “tour” answer)
- ⇒ For prospective college athletes, set up a meeting with coaches or athletic director
- ⇒ Pick up a campus newspaper to read



TAKE NOTES during your visits or shortly thereafter! Write down important aspects and a pro/con list. Compare it with the notes of whoever you go with. Sometimes they see things in a different light that shines another perspective than what you saw. As you start visiting multiple colleges, sometimes the information or what you remember becomes confused with other schools.



Questions for an admissions officer

Do your homework on the school before visiting, this will show your interest level, and it will also prevent questions that you can easily find without meeting. You should be prepared to both answer and ask questions. Also, answer honestly. DO NOT answer with what you think they want to hear. Here are a few questions that may interest you when speaking with an admissions official, with a more complete list appearing on the next two pages:

- What do students like best/least about the school?
- What are the strongest majors? Weakest?
- What are student traditions?
- What is the social life like? Do students stay on campus for weekends?
- How many clubs and organizations are there?
- What are the most popular activities?
- How does the school assist with career planning/job search?
- How is campus safety/security?
- How far are dorms from classrooms? Is there campus transportation to get to class?
- Where do students live off campus?
- What type of freshman transition do you offer?

Remember, you are not looking to get "hired" from this meeting, you are looking to see if this school is a good fit for your needs, interests, and personality.



Questions for a faculty member

(can also be asked to admissions officer)

- What are typical course assignments? Are you given a schedule as a freshman? When can you begin selecting courses on your own?
- How often will I meet with my advisor?
- What is the graduation rate of the school? Grad rate within my major?
- What extra help is available?
- How does this major stand out on campus? Among other colleges?
- What types of jobs do graduates in this major receive? Where? What percentage receive jobs within 6 months of graduation? How much do they earn?
- What percentage are accepted to grad school? Which schools? How often?

Write a follow up/thank you note/email for any person that you meet with!



College Visits