

College Planning Calendar for High School Seniors



Introduction

Making the decision to go to college is an extremely important one. Your decision to do so has placed you on the biggest journey of your young life. It involves a lot of planning, anticipation and changes that are not easy to deal with but can be very exciting.

During your senior year, you will spend time reviewing/completing numerous admission forms, writing essays and working to get lots of papers work together.

Preparing for college is quite a strenuous process, especially when you apply to multiple institutions you will want to make sure you have as much help as you can get with all your paperwork and make sure things are in order.

To help you stay on track, it is a good idea to have a college planning calendar in place to make sure that you get things right and do not miss out on anything along your journey.

Listed below by each individual month of your senior year are a few tips and reminders. Please note that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but is meant to serve as a guideline while you are planning and going through your senior year.

Feel free to omit anything that does not apply and add anything that we did not include but is important for you.

July

- Spend some time during your summer vacation (prior to returning as a senior) visiting some college websites. This is also a great time to attend any open houses and arrange college visits to any schools you may be interested in attending.
- Many high schools will have college planning meetings scheduled for returning seniors. Now would be a good time to check with your Parents to see if they have been notified by mail to arrange an appointment. If they have not received a notification, you or your parent should contact your prospective guidance counselor at the high school to determine the status of the meeting.

August

- Starting from August, you should have a step by step college plan in place. An important part of your college planning calendar should be to organize your funds for college. Consider getting a complete evaluation of all the money you have put away and saved for college. Discuss with your parents on this if they are open to it and also look at what financial aid you might be eligible for.
- Scholarship qualification is not only about academic excellence alone, you may qualify for a number of different reasons so be sure to check out what you may be eligible for.

- Did you take the SAT exam as a junior? That's fine if you did, however, I would encourage you to take the SAT again during your senior year. According to www.CollegeBoard.com, if you plan on taking the SAT again, the beginning of your senior year is the best time. This is because their research shows that students who take the SAT a second time usually improve their score. Register for your SATs and make sure you are setting aside proper time to give it your best. Test dates and registration deadlines for next school year should be available during the summer in the student services Office of your high school. You can also get this information online at www.CollegeBoard.com.

September

- During September work on the next step, which is to pick out the top colleges of your choice. Compare costs of the colleges you have chosen and make it a point to continue to visit some more campuses so you can figure out which one could be the right one for you.
- Also consider your subjects very carefully and analyze your career choice. Many kids are confused about what career path to choose. Right now, you may be getting pressured by parents or your peers to go in one career direction or another. While it is okay to listen, in the end, only you can make the best decision for you. So make sure that you are listening to that quiet voice inside of your head that knows you better than anyone else.
- Make sure you have your calendar filled in with the important dates during your admission process. The registration, admission, fees deadlines, scholarship deadlines and so on should be carefully marked so you do not miss out any of them. If you find that two colleges have overlapping dates check if you can do an on-line application rather than run between two campuses.
- If you intend to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman in college, you must register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. It is strongly suggested that you register in September of your senior year in high school. If you are planning to play college athletics you need to file with the NCAA Eligibility Center, go on-line to http://eligibilitycenter.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html

October

- For a senior student, college preparations include a long process and one that requires a lot of planning and efforts. You can never be too prepared for your college admissions so the more you organize your activities and the more time you manage carefully, the better it is. Once you are into October, you have to get down to getting the feel of it as much as you can.
- Attending some college fairs is also a good idea to get a better idea of what is required and what you should be focusing on.
- Make sure that you talk to teachers, counselors and employers about your letters of recommendation well in advance. The information on the each letter should be accurate as colleges receive tons of applications and will be able to spot a fake easily or will grill you during the academic interview.
- Work on application essays. Colleges use essays to learn more about your reasons for applying to their specific school. Your essay gives them some insight into your character, meaning it helps them get a sense of who you are. The essay also demonstrates your writing skills as well as your ability to organize your thoughts logically. This is also an opportunity for you to express how you differ from other students are also applying.

November

- By the time you are beginning November, you will need to have finished with your deadlines for application. Request forms for financial aid if you are planning to look for a scholarship or government aid. Apply for private scholarships for which you are eligible.
- Complete early decision and early action applications. If you haven't done so, bring in your application packets to your guidance counselor(s) for review and processing.
- Follow up on the letters of recommendation if there is any pending. A good letter of recommendation can make or break your college application. While [College admissions reviewers](#) are interested in what you have to say about yourself (in your essays) they also interested in what others have to say about you.

Most college applications request 1-3 recommendation letters from people who know you in and out of the classroom. Think of and then approach some adults, such as teachers or people in your community to write a recommendation letter on your behalf. Make sure you give them enough time to write the letter.

December

- December to June will be hectic as this will be the time you have to finalize on which school you will be attending and also notify the schools you are not planning to attend.
- Plan your transport, check out suitable accommodation and check that all your paperwork for health insurance, financial needs and more are all done. With a proper college planning calendar, you will be all set to begin the best part of your life!
- Continue to complete and submit college applications. Check Deadline dates! As you finish and send your applications, be sure to keep copies.

January

- Begin working on the [FAFSA](#) with your parents. Your [FAFSA](#) Form should be submitted as close to January 1st as possible. You can pick up a copy in your guidance counselor's office. Parents may mail a [FAFSA](#) (Free application for Federal Student Aid), available in the Student Services Office, or on-line, after January 1. However, completing the on-line [FAFSA](#) form has become the recommended standard. Go on-line to www.fafsa.ed.gov to get it processed faster.
- If you have not done so, complete and submit any scholarship and grant applications. Continue to search for scholarship opportunities. Parents should attend a financial aid workshop.
- Note: Have you ensured that all of the colleges you have applied to received a copy of your transcript. If you cannot be sure now is the time to confirm this.
- Follow up with counselor and teachers that letters of recommendation and transcripts have been sent.

February

- Avoiding “Senioritis” -- Many would consider this the down-hill point of the senior year and may begin to allow their grades to slip. Accepting colleges do look at second semester grades, now is not the time to start goofing off, this is the time to finish strong.
- Review [Student Aid Report \(SAR\)](#) from the FAFSA you completed.

March

- If you have applied to more than one college, begin to prioritize your choices, ranking them by whatever characteristics you feel are necessary. Some tips: rank them by field of study, geographic location and cost.
- Continue to complete scholarship applications. Acceptance to colleges will soon arrive.

April

- Start looking for acceptance letters in the mail during this month. During this period you will start to receive financial aid and scholarship letters. Do not let these letters sit on your desk or dresser. Share them with your parents and high school counselors.
- By this time, most admission decisions have arrived. Carefully review all your acceptances and perhaps revisit your top choices.
- Review financial aid packages and talk with college financial aid officers if necessary.
- Note the date when the college you have chosen requires a deposit to confirm you spot in their Freshmen Class. (Most colleges require a deposit by May 1st)
- Inform Student Services (high school guidance counselors) where you have been accepted and what scholarships you have received.

May

- Rejected Colleges — Begin to notify colleges that have accepted you of your intentions not to attend. While this may appear to be pointless, it is the courteous thing to do. This also allows them to make provisions to offer the slot that was set aside for you to someone else.
- Have you been wait-listed by a college? If you are planning to still enroll if accepted, inform the admissions department of your intentions. Also, ask them how you might further strengthen your application.
- One more thing to consider --- [Will you need financial aid?](#) If the answer is yes, ask admissions whether funds will be available if you're accepted. Ask them if they can assign someone that you can work with to resolve any admissions or financial aid problems.

June

- If you have not already done so, decide which college you will be attending. Next, ask your high school to send a final transcript of your grades to the college you have chosen.
- Make sure that you accept the financial aid award from the college you decided to attend. This is normally done in writing but more and more is being done on-line on the college's website.

Congratulations on graduating from high school! Now relax and have some fun over the summer, but not too much fun.

GOOD LUCK with Your College Career!

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