

# Sophomore Year - College Planning Outline

## Basic Checklist

- Explore career choices.
- Think about what kind of education/training different careers require.
- Collect college information.
- Visit colleges and talk with college students.
- Be ready with a list of questions to ask on your campus visit.
- Use this list of college characteristics to decide how to evaluate different colleges.
- Continue/start saving for college.
- Consider your reasons for going to college and how they relate to your career interests.
- Join/continue extracurricular activities.

## Pre-College Checklist Outlined by Month

### July

- Start/continue saving money for college. It's smart to save.
- Start thinking about the cost of college and how much you and your family can afford. Knowing how much you can afford may help with deciding which colleges and universities to apply to in fall of your senior year.
- If you wish to get a head start on the financial aid process, start researching scholarships. Some scholarships are available for high school sophomores.
- Obtain a Social Security Card (if you don't already have one). A Social Security number is required for college applications, standardized tests, and financial aid.

### August

- Earn top grades this year to have the highest possible GPA and class rank.
- Plan to be a leader in a few extracurricular activities this school year. Leadership is one of the most valuable student qualifications sought by college admission officers.

### September

- Focus your extracurricular interests on activities you are passionate about. Your activities should be those you are prepared to keep involved with throughout your high school career; ideally, activities should support your student theme. A high level of involvement and accomplishment in a few activities is more important than participating in numerous activities on a surface level.
- Take on leadership roles in some of your extracurricular activities. Leadership is one of the most valuable student qualifications sought by college admission officers.
- Review for the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test® (PSAT/NMSQT). The PSAT/NMSQT is good practice for next year's SAT Reasoning Test; test results will not be used for college admission. All sophomores at TLHS are registered to take the PSAT in October.

### October

- Take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test® (PSAT/NMSQT). On the test sheet, check the box that releases your name to colleges so you can start receiving information from them.
- Attend college fairs (or "college nights"). Speak with college representatives and pick up information to learn about options for college. Remember to be professional in all interactions with college and university representatives.

- Keep thinking about your interests and possible college majors.
- Develop teacher and upperclassmen relationships. Plan to use teachers and older high school students as mentors. Learn what you can from college-bound students going through the college admission process so you will be better prepared when you begin the process in your junior year.

## **November**

- Research the types of colleges and universities you may wish to attend and discuss college costs with your parent(s).
- Learn about financial aid. Merit-based scholarships are awarded based on your GPA, so do well in your coursework.
- Research college summer enrichment programs for high school students. If you find a summer program of interest, start the application process next month.

## **December**

- Investigate college summer enrichment programs for high school students. Start filling out application materials for programs you wish to attend.

## **January**

- Do well on your final exams this semester. Earn the impressive grades needed for admission to college and to receive merit-based scholarships.
- Study hard this semester to earn top grades so you can have the highest possible GPA and class rank.
- Continue to develop respectful, hard-working relationships with your teachers. Good relationships result in superior letters of recommendation when you apply for college admission and scholarships.
- Apply for college summer enrichment programs of interest. Meet all application deadlines.
- Continue participating in extracurricular activities (inside and outside of school). Dedicate yourself to a few extracurricular activities and work toward leadership positions. Leadership is one of the most valuable student qualifications sought by college admission officers.

## **February**

- Attend college fairs this spring if any are available. Remember to be professional in all interactions with college and university representatives.
- It's never too soon to begin searching for colleges and universities. Think about your ideal college or university and its characteristics; begin searching for colleges and universities that fit your needs.

## **March**

- Begin thinking seriously about your career goals and interests. Researching career options may help you decide on a college major.
- Think about job shadowing. Contact professionals in your home town that will permit you to accompany them for a day to observe what they do. Professionals can offer valuable insights about careers and what it takes to get a job in that field.
- Research college factors important to you to help research colleges that best fit your needs.
- If you have identified colleges of interest, consider visiting their campuses during spring break or summer.
- Start thinking about summer activities – Work a job or internship, provide volunteer service, take an advanced credit course, a community college class, or perform another activity to build your student résumé.

## April

- Continue to build hard-working, respectful relationships with teachers through the entire semester.
- Research opportunities for summer employment, internships, volunteering, or coursework. Use summer months wisely to develop and improve your student résumé.
- Continue to research career options and consider possible college majors.
- If you're interested in attending a military academy after high school graduation, request information to learn about that academy and their admission requirements.
- Continue to study hard to earn top grades. High GPA's open college admission doors.

## May

- Sign up for summer activities – Work a job or internship, provide volunteer service, or enroll in college summer enrichment program.
- Do well on your final exams next month. Earn the impressive grades needed to be admitted to college and to earn merit-based scholarships.
- Plan to work hard this summer to impress your employers, supervisors or course instructors; these are people you may ask for letters of recommendation in the fall of your senior year . . . but only if you do an excellent job for them this summer.
- If you will have a job this summer, save as much money as possible for college.
- If interested in attending a military academy after high school graduation, contact an academy representative and plan to start the application process next year.
- Continue to think about college majors of interest throughout the summer. Conduct research on possible careers that may spark interest in a specific major.
- Consider visiting college campuses this coming summer.
- Continue to discuss college options and costs with your parents over the summer. Keep in mind a small, private university may offer you substantial scholarships and cost you less than other schools that offer very little financial aid.

## June

- Update your student résumé to include freshman and sophomore year activities and accomplishments.
- Be active this summer. Use summer months wisely to build your student résumé.
- If your summer activities include a job, internship, or volunteer service, give it your all and be outstanding. Work to impress your bosses and supervisors; these are people you may ask for letters of recommendation in the fall of your senior year . . . but only if you do an excellent job for them this summer.
- Visit a few college campuses this summer.
- Continue to build your vocabulary by reading during summer months (and throughout the year).
- Continue to build strong academic, language and critical thinking skills during your four years of high school.