

**Class of 2017**



**Senior Handbook**

# Senior Year Planning

Your senior year is your opportunity to strengthen your skills, broaden your experiences, and to help you prepare for all of the challenges ahead. A successful senior year can help launch you on the path to a successful future.

Make the most of your senior year:

- ❖ Maintain a challenging course load. You should take the most rigorous course available.
- ❖ Stay active and involved. Continue involvement in activities, sports, volunteer work, etc.
- ❖ Take advantage of internships or career-focused jobs.
- ❖ If you have excelled at high school classes, consider taking a college class or dual enrollment with Wentworth College or State Fair Community College!!

## September

- ✓ Begin and maintain a college calendar of all admission and financial aid deadlines
- ✓ Review your transcript in detail and check credits for graduation!
- ✓ Register for the ACT as soon as possible whether you are retaking or taking for the first time! The October test date is your best choice!
- ✓ If you haven't already, make a list of colleges that interest you and request information from them. Make sure you and your parents are on the same page. Iron out an area of disagreement before the search process gets too far along. Keep a folder on every school in which you are interested.
- ✓ Look at application deadlines. Develop a calendar with all deadlines! This will save you hours of searching!
- ✓ Meet with your counselor for a "Senior Checkup" to review your credits and future plans! I want to know how I can BEST help you!!
- ✓ If you haven't already, make plans to visit colleges of interest.

- ✓ Consider volunteering or getting involved in a service project. (This can help make you “stand out from the crowd” on your application.)
- ✓ Preparing yourself for college involves several factors:
  - Seriously think about your long-term goals. While many students change career directions and majors several times in their undergraduate years, knowing yourself will be very helpful.
  - Develop a student schedules that works for you. Developing discipline in your habits now will make the adjustment easier when you get to college and there is no one to tell you how to study.
  - Have a POSITIVE attitude and BELIEVE in yourself!!

## October

- ✓ Narrow colleges of interest to less than five. Research these thoroughly!!
- ✓ All high-school athletes wishing to compete in Division I or II college sports must register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Information about Clearinghouse can be found in the *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete* at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). The Clearinghouse maintains and processes all of the initial-eligibility certifications. See the website for the eligibility standards. If you have further questions about the NCAA eligibility, you may call the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse at 877-262-1492.
- ✓ Begin preparing applications with great care! MOST institutions recommend applications for admissions be submitted by November. I will review applications with you, if you would like.
- ✓ Begin requesting teacher recommendations. Ask **at least 10 school days** prior to the deadline.
- ✓ File early decision or early action applications before Dec 1.
- ✓ Find out if your colleges of choice have institutional scholarship deadlines by visiting their websites or reviewing their literature.
- ✓ If you are not planning to attend college, see the counselor and begin procedures for other post-high school opportunities.

## November/December

- ✓ Continue to search and apply for scholarships while you are snowed in! Many scholarship deadlines fall on or around Dec 1. Check the college website for all deadlines.
- ✓ Be sure to apply for scholarships in time to meet application deadlines.
- ✓ Start gathering identity and financial documents necessary to complete the FAFSA. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) for a worksheet.
- ✓ Both student and parent should request a Department of Education ID number. The ID serves as an electronic signature for the FAFSA on the WEB and significantly reduces processing time.
- ✓ Financial award letters may arrive with the early admissions. If you have questions about the financial aid award, contact the financial aid office directly. Make sure you understand the terms and conditions of the award before making a final commitment.

## January

- ✓ Parents should file financial aid forms (FAFSA) as soon as possible after Jan 1. Applying early improves the chances of receiving aid from as many resources as possible. Electronic filing is recommended at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- ✓ Be sure to complete the financial aid application for each college.
- ✓ Male students who will be 18 at the time they complete the FAFSA are required to register with Selective Service to be eligible for federal and state aid. ([www.ss.gov](http://www.ss.gov))
- ✓ Continue to apply for scholarships.
- ✓ Watch deadlines!

## February/March

- ✓ **AVOID SENIORITY!!** Senior grades can be crucial to your admission (including 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter grades, especially for those on waiting lists or on the cusp of admissions.) All acceptances are conditional until colleges deem your final grades have met their standards.
- ✓ Many priority financial aid deadlines fall in February. Applications received by the priority deadlines are given the highest consideration.
- ✓ The Student Aid Report (SAR) should arrive two to four weeks after the FAFSA is submitted. You should see an estimate online almost immediately. The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) figure is printed on the front page of the upper right. If the SAR has not been received four weeks after submitting the FAFSA, call 1-800-4-FED-AID. If there are any errors on the SAR, make corrections and mail back immediately. If you provided a valid email address, you can view and make corrections online.
- ✓ Continue to apply for scholarships! APPLY! APPLY!!
- ✓ Begin looking for summer jobs or internships

#### **April**

- ✓ MOST colleges will have let you know your admission status! Be looking in the mail for THAT letter from THAT college!
- ✓ Continue to apply for scholarships!

#### **May**

- ✓ GRADUATION!!!!!!
- ✓ Complete the semester with good attendance and academic standing.
- ✓ Fill out a transcript request to be sent to your college!
- ✓ Finalize housing plans and college class schedule

**Questions to ask College Reps**

### Admission

- ✓ Am I eligible for admissions?
- ✓ What tests are required?
- ✓ What are the deadlines?
- ✓ What high school course preparation is needed?
- ✓ What academic demands can I expect to find? How intense is the academic atmosphere (average hours spent studying, library full on weekends, average ACT scores)?
- ✓ What percentage of students return after their freshman year?

### Cost

- ✓ How much will it cost (tuition, room and board, meal plan)?
- ✓ What kind of financial aid is available and how do I apply?

### Majors and study programs available

- ✓ Does the school offer the major I want?
- ✓ Is the school strong in my area of interest?
- ✓ How many students are in my area of interest?
- ✓ What courses are included in a typical freshman program?
- ✓ If I am undecided, will I have the change to explore some areas of interest?

### Social Life

- ✓ What is the dorm life like?
- ✓ What do students do on the weekends?
- ✓ Are there campus activities/clubs?
- ✓ How do I meet new people?

**THE FAFSA IS USED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:**

## **I. PELL GRANT**

The Pell Grant is financial aid you don't have to pay back.

Determination of eligibility is based on a family financial statement and cost of education at the school you are attending. Amounts of awards vary. Application is made through completion of the Family Financial Statement. APPLY AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE AFTER JAN. 1<sup>ST</sup>.

## **2. SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT (SEOG)**

The SEOG is financial aid that does not need to be paid back. Priority is given to Pell Grant recipients. Contact the institution you will be attending for information.

## **3. STAFFORD LOAN PROGRAM**

The Stafford Loan provides low-interest loans through banks and other commercial lending institutions. Loans are not limited to low-income students. Repayment of loan is deferred until after you leave college. Application is made through completion of the Family Financial Statement.

## **4. FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL LOAN FOR STUDENTS (SLS)**

Independent students may borrow from a commercial lender if enrolled on at least a half-time basis and demonstrate financial need.

Repayment begins 60 days after disbursement at a minimum of \$50 per month with a variable interest rate not to exceed 11%. The interest rate is reset annually. Principal and interest may be deferred while the student is enrolled at least half time.

## **5. PERKINS LOAN**

This is a low-interest (5%) loan to help you pay for education after high school. Maximum awards vary. Students must sign a promissory note. Students do not have to pay back a loan while a full-time student. Contact the institution you will be attending for information. Some Perkins Loans may be forgiven if the job after college is in an area identified as a low-income area.