

COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

JUNIOR YEAR

Above all else, get good grades and read for pleasure. Keep graded papers of which you are particularly proud as some colleges ask for these as a writing sample.

Start making decisions about the characteristics of the right college for you.

- Size of student body
- Proximity to a major city
- Climate
- Distance from home

Buy a college guide (The Fiske Guide, 331 Best Colleges etc) and have fun reading about different colleges. Become familiar with the statistics presented in the guide books.

Visit colleges of interest both locally and far away. By visiting colleges, you begin to get an idea of where you'd like to go and how different colleges can be from one another.

Buy a notebook to record impressions of visits, interviews, tours, information sessions and open houses. Take notes on all the colleges that you visit even if you only drive around them.

Get a job or volunteer in a position which gives you a chance to do something which is meaningful to you.

If your email address is inappropriate, change to a more mature, professional address. You want to be careful what your email address might communicate about yourself.

SEPTEMBER

- Prepare for the PSAT by taking a class, a clinic, or taking a practice test on your own.
- Attend the college rep visits offered at your school to start learning about the characteristics of colleges

OCTOBER

- Take the PSAT.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- PSAT scores are sent to high schools in late November or early December.
- Talk to your family and friends about your college plans and determine how they might assist you..
- Become familiar with college search websites such as Prep HQ.

- Explore specific college websites and request more information and to be placed on their mailing lists.

JANUARY

- Plan to visit college campuses during your breaks this semester.
- Plan your testing strategy and sequence. Place critical dates on your calendar. Register for tests now. Early registration helps you get a seat at the testing location nearest you.
- If you haven't already done so, plan a strategy for getting the test scores that you want. Prepare by taking a course, taking practice tests, using software programs or, if appropriate, utilizing a tutoring service.
- Become familiar with college search websites such as collegeboard.com and princetonreview.com.
- Memorize your social security number. See your College Advisor for assistance if you do not have a social security number.
- Continue to explore college websites and request college view books and catalogs.
- Do you need financial aid? Along with your parents, estimate your financial aid using one of the calculator tools at FinAid.org.
- Meet with the METRO College Advisor to discuss your specific situation.

FEBRUARY

- Start to plan your summer activities wisely. Consider internships for the summer. Research and apply for internships now.

APRIL/MAY

- Plan your senior year classes. Make sure you have satisfied UC/CSU course requirements if you intend to apply there.
- Narrow your list of colleges a bit.
- Stay in touch by email with admission reps from your 1st choice colleges.
- Using your transcript, schedule of classes for next year and your test results, calculate your UC and CSU GPA and eligibility.
- Line up teacher recommendations.
- Continue to plan your summer activities.

JUNE

- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse if you are an athlete.

- Graduating seniors are a great source of information. Talk to them and ask what they wish they had done differently in the college planning process, where they are going and why they chose the college or university they selected.

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- Begin to draft your essays. This is particularly important if you are planning to apply early decision or early action.
- Complete the common application online. Note: it is usually revised each year and available in July.
- Decide on a set of three really good questions to ask every college you are considering.
- Narrow your list to no more than 10 private colleges.
- If unhappy with your test scores, decide whether or not you are going to take a prep class or prepare in some other way to improve your scores. Summer is a good time to do this. Don't forget to register for tests well in advance to avoid late fees.

SENIOR YEAR

Above all else, get good grades and continue to read for pleasure.

SEPTEMBER

- Finalize your list of colleges.
- Decide if you are taking any tests during the fall. Register for the tests NOW.
- Evaluate your UC/CSU course requirements if you haven't done this yet.
- Write your essays.
- Begin meeting with admission reps when they visit your school. You want the rep to remember you so be enthusiastic and make a good impression.
- Go to local college presentations and fairs.
- Begin researching scholarships if you need them.
- Visit your final choice colleges if you haven't already.
- Stay in touch by email with admission reps from your first choice colleges.
- If you are planning to apply as an early decision or early action candidate, make sure that you calendar application deadlines.
- Start private and out of state applications NOW!

OCTOBER

- Consider attending an on-the-spot admission day at select CSU campuses. At the end of the day, you may have an acceptance to a CSU campus.
- Attend UC Preview Days on campuses that offer them.
- Finish your essays.
- Complete CSU and UC applications after they become available on 10/1. Continue to work on applications and complete the ones you can..

NOVEMBER

- Have test scores sent to colleges.
- Do the necessary paperwork to make sure that your teacher recommendations and counselor recommendations get done. Remember that the Metro paperwork must be done at least 20 days before the college deadline.

- Complete the UC and CSU applications by 11/30. Remember that their computer systems are notorious for crashing on 11/30 so get them submitted earlier than 11/30.
- Make copies of everything you send to colleges., including electronic applications. Mail forms early and send them with a return receipt requested.
- Submit all private college applications by 12/1 so that the rest of the month can be more relaxed.
- If applying for financial aid, parents and students must obtain a PIN number for use with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

JANUARY

- If you haven't done it already, visit the schools to which you have applied and interview with them.
- If applying for financial aid, start work on the FAFSA and CSS Profile.
- Send first semester senior year grades to colleges that require them.

FEBRUARY

- Work on the FAFSA. The deadline for submission can vary by college but, in general, the deadlines are in late February and early March. Pay attention to deadlines! Submit early to avoid heavy submission traffic on the web.

MARCH

- If you are planning on attending a community college, find out how to register and sign up for and take their placement exams.
- Visit colleges where you have been accepted if this will help you make your decision.
- Make certain that colleges have all the financial aid information they require.

APRIL

- Correct FAFSA and CSS Profile information when your parents have filed their taxes.
- Compare financial aid offers.
- If unhappy about financial aid, call the college's financial aid office and discuss the issue.
- Respond to wait list offers, sending more information if appropriate.
- Appeal UC denials.
- Make your decision!
- Send a deposit to only ONE college!

- **Send housing forms - often they have different deadlines than deposits.**

MAY

- Notify the one college of your acceptance by 5/1.
- Notify your high school counselor of which college you plan to attend.
- Negotiate with financial aid offices.

JUNE

- Send final Metro and community college transcripts to your chosen college.