



DCS College Bound Newsletter

November 2011

"Follow your destiny wherever it leads you."

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"I have an open door policy. That means that if the door is open – "come on in" you are welcome anytime."

College Planning for High School Seniors

From: American Education Services (AES)

Now is the time for high school seniors to organize everything related to their college plans. There are applications and forms to complete and deadlines to keep track of. We've compiled a list of things seniors should do this year to make sure their plans fall into place... without those last-minute anxiety attacks!

- Make a calendar showing application deadlines for admission, financial aid, and scholarships. Students can use the [collegeCalendar on aesSuccess.org](http://collegeCalendar.on.aesSuccess.org) to keep track of their upcoming deadlines.
- Research scholarship opportunities.
- Take a full course load of college-prep classes.
- Strive to make good grades.
- Register for and take the standardized tests (SAT, ACT).
- Participate in extracurricular or volunteer activities.
- Attend college-prep or financial aid nights.
- Ask teachers or a school counselor for letters of recommendation.
- Narrow your list of colleges to three to six schools.
- Visit the colleges you're most interested in attending.
- Complete admission and scholarship applications.
- Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as soon as possible after January 1.

To view the entire college-planning timeline, with tips for everyone from freshmen to seniors, go to: <http://www.educationplanner.org/>

College Application Checklist

Seniors, each year several colleges and universities send me a report that gives me the disposition of all applications received at their institution. I am amazed at the number of applications that end up incomplete. Common mistakes are: no transcripts, waiting for SAT/ACT test scores, application fees not paid or residency statement is not correct or complete. Remember that when you do the Florida State university application on-line, that you must print off the last page and complete the residency verification part. When completed, mail this to the college along with your application fee and your essays and letters of recommendation. Finally, when you send anything to an admissions office, please always follow-up with them in two weeks to verify that they received your information.

Here are some general guidelines and suggestions that I hope will help you with the application process.

1. **The General Application:** Is all information accurate and legible? Don't leave questions blank unless the application allows it. **Most colleges now prefer that you apply on-line.**
2. **Academic Transcripts:** Forms needed to request that transcripts be sent are



College Searches

[FACTS.org](#)

College Board:
[ACT:](#)

[Princeton Review:](#)

[EduPrep:](#)

Search for colleges,
and scholarships:

College and scholarship
searches

[Knowledge for College:](#)

[Art and Design Colleges:](#)

[College Accreditation:](#)

[Colleges that Change Lives:](#)

[Florida Health Careers:](#)

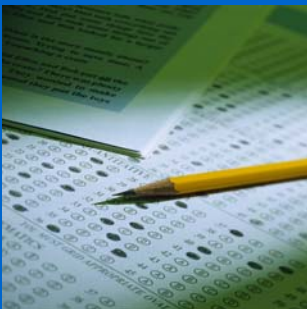
[Colleges in the UK:](#)

[Virtual College Tours:](#)

[College Confidential
College View](#)

[Occupational Outlook
Handbook](#)

[The common Application:](#)



TESTING

Here are some websites that
provide SAT and ACT
preparation

[Number2.com](#)

located in my office as well as the registrars office. If we are able to send your transcripts electronically, there will be no charges. One dollar will be required if we must print and mail your transcripts.

- 3. [Letters of Recommendation:](#)** Do you have the number of recommendations required? Also, check with the admissions office if they need to be sealed.
[Remember that not all colleges require letters!!](#)
- 4. [Work Samples/Portfolios:](#)** Include your name, contact information and the project title on every item. Send copies, not originals.
- 5. [Application Essays:](#)** Make sure your name, social security number, date of birth, contact information and essay title are on each page. Be original and remember to change college names around if you are sending your essay to more than one college.
- 6. [Reply Cards:](#)** Include these for your prospective college to mail back to you as receipt of delivery. They should be stamped and self-addressed.
- 7. [SAT/ACT Scores:](#)** If you need to send test scores to additional schools, contact the testing company immediately. **SAT:** [www.collegeboard.com](#) **ACT:** [www.act.org](#) Scores are mailed about three weeks after your request. Due to timing issues, I strongly recommend that seniors indicate where they want scores sent when they register for a test. This will save precious time.
- 8. [Signatures:](#)** Before mailing, verify that all necessary forms have been signed.
- 9. [Keep Copies:](#)** Create a file to hold copies of all documents in case you need to refer to them later.

Advice From Current College Students

- Visit a variety of types of schools (big, small, private, public, different geographical locations) during the summer so you'll be sure of what kind of school you want to go to.
- Start early in organizing your application materials. Investigate the application requirements of the colleges you are considering as early as possible. Keep a list of your schools and what you have to send them so you don't miss any deadlines.
- Don't forget to make copies of everything!!!!
- Start early and reduce stress! Apply to rolling admission schools as early in the fall as possible- it makes you feel good to know you're in somewhere, and you have a better chance of being accepted.
- Don't let anyone tell you that you cannot be accepted at a specific college. The worst is you get a "no" or "waitlist" and the best is you get a "yes", but you will never know unless you try.
- Check the Common Application. If more than one school you're going to apply to accepts the Common Application, just do that.
- Be patient and get your applications in on time. Apply where you want and don't let your friends influence you.
- Don't rule out schools just because they're too expensive; you never know what will come through scholarships or financial aid.
- Don't apply early to a school just to be "done with it" if you are not POSITIVE that that is the school for you. There's a school that's right for everyone, you just have to take the time to find it.
- Start looking for scholarship opportunities early. Some scholarship deadlines are before the start of school.
- In your essay, be sure to write about something that is really a part of you, something important. It shows if you bluff.
- If there is an optional essay, do it anyway to show that you are really interested in the college.
- If you are asking teachers for recommendations, give them at least a week so that you do not inconvenience them.

Max the Test

Princeton Review

State University
Minimums:

SAT:
Math: 460 / Verbal: 460 /
writing: 440

ACT: 19 Reading
19 Math



NCAA INFORMATION

NCAA online:

NCAA Clearinghouse initial
eligibility

Recruiting search website:

CampusChamps.com -

Tennis Recruiting:

If you have any favorite
websites that you would
like to share with us,
please e-mail the links to
me at:

rroddy@dadeschools.net

- Have an open mind and go where you feel comfortable.
- Visit the colleges before accepting an offer of admission. Get a feel for the campus.
- I think it is important to spend the night at the schools you are interested in and talk to as many people as possible. Also see what the weekends are like and what the atmosphere of the school is like.

Get Noticed: 10 College Essay Tips

1. **Don't "recycle" essays.** An essay that sounds like it has been used before will blend with everyone else's.
2. **Captivate your audience.** Make your essay engaging and memorable. Include a quick, enticing intro; give a reason to finish reading it.
3. **Be yourself.** Choose a topic that is meaningful to you. Use your own voice. Show off a side of yourself that your application does not; don't simply write what you think an admissions office wants to hear.
4. **Accentuate the positive.** When writing about a personal experience, emphasize how the experience changed you for the better.
5. **Write in the active voice.** Doing so will make for a clearer, more concise essay.
6. **Don't overextend.** Your essay isn't a term paper. Stay focused on your topic.
7. **Ask people for input.** Whether it's a teacher, counselor, friend or parent, ask someone you respect for some candid feedback. Is it confusing? Boring?
8. **Leave time for rewriting.** Look for weak or dull spots and spelling and grammatical errors. Never let your first draft be your final draft.
9. **Revise, reword.** Improve on your first draft through various rewrites. Read the essay aloud to find awkward sentences or problems.
10. **Pursue perfection.** Have someone else look it over. Quadruple-check the spelling. Type your essay carefully

Considering a College Honors Program

Written by Jennifer Gross.

If you're looking for small classes, in-depth discussions, and an opportunity to get to know your professors, don't be surprised if your search takes you to a large public university. In an effort to recruit and retain top students, many large universities have created honors programs that go beyond a few special classes. To read more about this topic, please go to: [Considering a College Honors Program](#)

Engaging Students for Success

By Mitchell Reiss, President of Washington College.

There's a lot of talk in the media about the value of a private liberal arts education. Is it worth the cost? How does a liberal arts degree prepare graduates to be successful in the workplace? Why should students consider spending four years at a small residential college where the emphasis is on reading, research, writing and reflection rather than on vocational training? [Read more.](#)

Colleges of Distinction

From time to time I want to highlight some colleges of distinction that you may have never heard of. Beyond the more popular universities, I would like students to be open-minded with the hope that "the perfect college" for them may not be the one everyone talks about, but the "diamond in the rough" that strikes that chord within. To find more colleges of



Common Application Errors

“I’ll start the application next week.” Don’t run out of time to complete the application. Give yourself at least two weeks to find mistakes.

“I already ran a spell-check on my computer.” Words can be spelled correctly but used incorrectly. Ask a counselor, teacher or family member to proof read the application to catch any errors or poor phrasing.

“One copy is enough.” Print out any online forms and keep copies of all paperwork.

“I can send my application as soon as I’m finished.” Before you seal the envelope or click “Send” on your computer, double- and triple-check that you have included all necessary materials.

Follow-up in two weeks to verify that all mailed materials have been received.

“I assume this is right.” If you’re confused by a question or any part of the application, ask someone. A quick call to the admissions office can save you from making an embarrassing error

Distinction go to:

<http://www.collegesofdistinction.com/home>

Florida Colleges of Distinction

FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE

LAKELAND, FLORIDA

FSC offers outstanding opportunities for engaged learning — including guaranteed internships, study abroad, student-faculty collaborative research and performance, and service learning. [read more](#)

NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

New College of Florida was founded upon delivering a self-directed education to students of highest academic merit. Students here feel comfortable working both autonomously and with faculty to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves. [read more](#)

ROLLINS COLLEGE

WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

At Rollins, hands-on experience isn't an afterthought; it's a powerful, integral part of the educational environment. [read more](#)

SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

SAINT LEO, FLORIDA

Founded in 1889, Saint Leo University is Florida's oldest Catholic college and is today an internationally respected university featuring the latest advances in learning and technology. [read more](#)

STETSON UNIVERSITY

DELAND, FLORIDA

The future is not a destination or a place to be arrived at in a few years. The future is what students make it, limited only by dreams and hard work. Since 1883, Stetson has been helping students daring enough to lead lives of significance. [read more](#)

Career Exploration

Great web resources from students.gov

You may have noticed that the information in our "Career Spotlight section" comes from the Occupational Outlook Handbook from the Department of Labor - a great place to learn about all kinds of careers. But it's not the only great resource on students.gov that can help you learn about careers in the fields that interest you. Here are a few other random selections from the "Explore careers" section:

Career Voyages - Start exploring career options and be in demand by knowing about high-growth jobs with better wages and a brighter future! Career Voyages is the result of collaboration between the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education. <http://www.bls.gov/k12/>

Focus on Financial Aid: How to Apply

To be considered for financial aid, you are required to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the only application that makes you a candidate for all federal student aid, including:

- The Federal Pell Grant
- The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- The Federal Perkins Loan



You must go to the Registrar's Office to request copies of your Transcripts to be sent to those Colleges you applied to.



**National Association for
College Admission Counseling**
Guiding the way to higher education



<http://tinyurl.com/24htzg8>

Sponsored by:
Office of Student Financial
Assistance (OSFA)
Florida Department of
Education

- Federal Family Education Loans or Federal Direct Loans
- Federal Work-Study employment (FWS).

Many states use the FAFSA for state grant or scholarship consideration. The FAFSA may also be used for institutional aid, although colleges may require an additional institutional aid application, or the CSS Financial Aid PROFILE, for their own funds. To read more, go to: [Focus on Financial Aid: How to Apply](#)

Financial-Aid Myths that Hold Students Back

From: Miami-Dade College
"Educators Lead the way" 10/10

You might know these statements are false, but do all of your students? Unfortunately, these myths are still alive today and keep many from applying for financial aid. Keep reading for some facts you can use to combat the most common myths about financial aid.

- **Only families with really low income get aid.**
- **Only students with great grades get financial aid.**
- **Students should wait to be admitted before applying for financial aid.**
- **Aid is not for students with grades like mine.**
It's about need. GPA might be important for scholarships, but most federal aid programs don't look at high school grades.
- **I plan to work my way through college and don't need aid.**
There's nothing wrong with working one's way through college. But aid can be the difference between studying full time or part time. Research shows students who study part time and work full time are less likely to finish the degrees.
- **I'll apply for aid after I get admitted.**
By then it might be too late. Students should apply for aid first, even if they're not sure of their plans. Financial aid will then be in place when they are ready to make a decision.
- **A college degree is too expensive.**
Remind students of the cost of not getting a college degree. Without one, they will be limiting their career options and income potential. A degree is an investment in the future. .
- **I have a Bright Futures Scholarship, so I don't need financial aid.**
Students should apply for financial aid anyway, since Bright Futures scholarships offer a maximum dollar amount per credit hour. Financial aid might pay for any difference that isn't covered.



Steps to College

Steps to College is NACAC's online newsletter for and about students in the school-to-college transition.

Resources and Tips as You Begin Your College Search

- Surviving Your College Search: The Adventure Begins
- An Internet Road Map for the College-Bound Student
- Career Planning and College Choice
- College Rankings: Helpful or Hurtful?
- Faring Well at College Fairs
- College Visits: A Planning Checklist

Preparing for College While You're in High School

- Choosing High School Courses for College Success
- Choosing High School Activities Wisely
- MySpace in College Admission

Choosing the Best-Fit

- **I have prepaid college tuition, so I don't need financial aid.**
Even a prepaid plan might not fully cover all costs. Last year, [many parents bought basic Florida prepaid plans](#) covering less than half of the tuition and fees. To avoid a shortage of funding, students should apply for aid as well. If they're awarded aid and don't need it, they don't have to use it.
- **I wouldn't qualify for aid because my parents make too much money.**
There's no maximum income or cut-off amount that would disqualify someone from getting aid. Also, income isn't the only factor. The size of the family, the amount of tuition needed and even the age of the parents are all considered. Students shouldn't assume they won't qualify for aid.
- **Financial-aid forms are too complicated.**
Yes, they are somewhat complicated. But students should consider that they may get thousands of dollars in exchange for a few hours of work. Plus, FAFSA has been somewhat simplified. The [online FAFSA form](#) offers instructions for every step. There's even an early test run at [FAFSA 4ca \(www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov\)](#). Free help is available [online](#), through [live chat](#) and by phone (1-800-4-FED-AID), so there is no excuse not to apply!

We know it can be challenging to provide financial-aid help to your students. These free resources may help:

[The Dept of Education's Federal Aid Site for Counselors](#)
[Counselors and Mentors Handbook on Federal Student Aid](#) (pdf)
["Myths about Federal Aid"](#) Printable Sheet from the Dept. of Education (pdf)
[Miami Dade College's Financial Aid Site](#)

Help us combat these myths so more students apply for aid! [Contact](#) Miami Dade College with any questions or visit our [financial-aid website](#)

4 Ways to Cut the Cost of College

From: The College Solution Newsletter
by Lynn O'Shaughnessy

Sure college prices are continuing to climb, but there are ways to slash those prices.

In a recent post that I wrote for [CBSMoneyWatch](#), I shared four little-known ways to cut costs:

1. Avoid reach schools.
2. Explore colleges in other time zones.
3. Check grad rates -- avoid colleges that don't get students out in four years.
4. Obtain your Expected Family Contribution, which can help you target generous schools.

Here's my post that explains all these cost-saving strategies:

[4 Little Known Ways to Cut the Cost of College](#)

College

- Is a Large or Small College Right for You?
- Career and Technical Colleges: Careers in Focus
- Tips for Visual and Performing Arts Students
- Community College: A Viable Option
- Exercising Your Options: Tips for Student-Athletes

The College Admission Process

- The Parts of an Admission Folder
- Admission Tech 101: What Students Need to Know
- Early Decision/Early Action: Does the Early Bird Get the Worm?
- Getting Great Recommendations
- Top Ten Tips for Writing the College Essay
- Help with the Writing Process
- The Truth About College Interviews
- The Waiting Game: What if I'm Wait-Listed?
- Making the Final Decision

Financial Aid

- Focus on Financial Aid: An Introduction
- Focus on Financial Aid: How to Apply
- Focus on Financial Aid: Terminology and Words to Know
- Focus on Financial Aid: Resources
- The Scoop on Scholarships
- Financial Aid Basics
- Financial Aid Myths and Misconceptions
- Financial Aid Words to Know

For Parents

- Off to College? Enter Here: The Changing

Net Price Calculator: What You Need to Know

From: National Association for College Admission Counseling

As of this year, institutions participating in Title IV Student Financial Aid Programs will be required to install a net price calculator on their Websites. The National Center for Education Statistics and the Office of Postsecondary Education [announced the release of the new tool](#) last November. The calculator was a mandate of the Higher Education Act of 2008, and it will allow prospective students to calculate an estimated net price of enrollment at an institution.

"This requirement represents an endpoint in the federal debate about college costs and is the product of years of legislative proposals intended to contain the cost of college in the United States," said David Hawkins, Director of Public Policy and Research at NACAC. To read more, please go to: [Net Price Calculator: What You Need to Know](#)

Choosing a Free College

By Claudine Vainrub, MBA and Principal of EduPlan

How to choose a College that will not bankrupt me

At this time of the year, seniors and even graduate admissions candidates are thinking about their college and graduate school options. Being that the economy has hit many of us hard this year; the choices might not seem as abundant as when our family income is higher. So how do we evaluate the best college and grad school options for a tight budget? Here are some things you can do to enhance your chances of choosing programs that will allow you an outstanding education, while not making you go bankrupt in the process:

For more information on this topic, please go to:

<http://eduplan.us/choosing-a-free-college/>

How To Obtain Your EFC

Getting advance notice is better than waiting until your child receives his or her financial aid packages in the spring of her senior year in high school. I think families should obtain their EFC as early as a child's freshman year in high school. Here are two calculators that you can use to obtain your EFC.

[College Board's EFC Calculator](#) [FinAid's EFC Calculator](#)

Here is some of the information that you'll need to use the calculators:

- **Number of children in college.**
 - **Marital status of parents.**
 - **Adjusted gross income.**
 - **Non-retirement investments.**
 - **Income taxes paid for most recent calendar year.**
-

Parent/Child
Relationship

- For Parents: Preparing Your Child for the Social Aspects of College
- Tips for Parents: Countdown to College
- Tips for Parents: Helping Your Child Through College Admission
- Books for Parents of College-Bound Students
- A Parent's Guide to Financial Aid
- Everyone in My Child's Space

