

## YEAR-END ADVICE FOR COLLEGE-BOUND SENIORS

### March

- If you haven't completed your college applications and/or your FAFSA form, you need to do so immediately. Send them in soon!
- If you've already sent your college applications, you may have already received your acceptance or rejection letters. If you applied to more than one college, make sure you wait until you receive your financial aid offer from EACH college before making a decision where to attend next fall.
- If you completed your FAFSA on paper, you should be receiving an SAR (Student Aid Report) that will show how you answered each question on the FAFSA form. The form will ask you to correct any mistakes, if there are any. If there are no mistakes, you don't need to send the SAR back. If there ARE mistakes, make sure you correct them and then send the form back to FAFSA according to the instructions.

If you completed the FAFSA online, you can get your SAR online and simply make any corrections online. Just go to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to view your SAR and make corrections.

- Your SAR is made available to the colleges that you listed on your FAFSA. If you apply to a college, that college will then request your SAR from FAFSA. The college will then compile a financial aid offer for you, which will include any federal financial aid that you qualify for, plus possibly some state aid and/or university aid. If you completed your FAFSA in February, you should be receiving Financial Aid Offers from the colleges to which you applied during March and April.

### April & May

- Presuming you submitted your college applications and FAFSA forms on time, you should be hearing from colleges about two things: (1) an offer of admission (or a letter of rejection) from each college and (2) from each college that admitted you, an offer of financial aid.

These two decisions will come in separate envelopes. Your acceptance or rejection will come from the Office of Admissions for that college. Your Financial Aid Offer will come from the Office of Financial Aid, and will only be mailed to you if you were accepted by the Office of Admissions.

- If you were accepted by more than one college, wait until you get your Financial Aid Offers before you make a decision about where to attend. Once you get those offers, decide where you want to attend based on:
  - What you can afford, based on your financial aid award letters
  - The academic, social, and personal opportunities that are available at that college for you to grow into the type of person you want to become
  - The location of the college, based on your desires and needs (you'll be living there for two or four years, or more, so you should want to be there!)
  - What your heart is telling you---you're much more likely to be successful if you are excited about going to that college.
- If you really want to go to a college, but you didn't receive enough financial aid, consider appealing for more money. Send a letter or email to the Office of Financial Aid. You can also call them. Be very respectful. Explain your situation. Tell them that their college is your first choice, that you really want to be able to attend college there, but that it will be impossible for you to attend unless you get more help. You especially need to do this if your situation has changed (for example, if a parent has lost a job or your family faces a serious medical crisis). Ask them the following things:

- Can I provide you with any more information that will help you reconsider the offer?
  - Is there any way to get more work-study? (in other words, tell them you are willing to work hard to go to school there).
  - Do you have any suggestions for me regarding how I can live on a budget so that I can afford to go to school there?
- Pay attention to the deadline dates on your Acceptance Letters. When a college gives you an offer of admission, they also tell you when you need to let them know that you accept their offer. For example, a college may say “you need to let us know by May 15<sup>th</sup> if you accept our offer of admission. If you don’t let us know by May 15<sup>th</sup>, we will offer your seat to someone else.”

Deadline dates are much more common at 4-year colleges than at 2-year colleges, but make sure you read the information each college sends you to make sure. Often, colleges will ask you for a non-refundable deposit of \$100 or so, sometimes more or less, to “secure your spot.” In other words, they are making sure that you are serious about attending that college.

- If you plan to live on campus, you’ll need to complete a housing form by a specified date. Each college that accepts you will send you information about housing (unless you indicated that you’ll be living at home or off-campus). There are a few things you’ll want to keep in mind when completing this form:
  - Pay attention to the housing form deadline date. You’ll need to send the form in on time.
  - If the form lets you choose which building you want to live in, choose wisely. The best situation is to visit that college and actually look at the dorm choices. If you can’t visit, then make sure you read about each dorm building and pick the one that best suits you.
  - If you are allowed to choose your roommates, and if you have a friend or friend that will also be attending that college and that wants to room with you, then you can choose each other. The important thing to keep in mind is that YOU will have to write your friend’s name on your form, and YOUR FRIEND will need to write your name on his or her form. If you don’t BOTH write each other’s names on your forms, they won’t match you up.
  - Some colleges will ask you a long list of questions so that they can make sure you get a roommate who is compatible with your lifestyle. Take these questions seriously. You don’t want a roommate who loves to get up early in the morning if you like to sleep in. On the other hand, college is a great time to get to know people who are different than you. If your roommate is a biology major, and you’re a music major, that difference could be a good thing, not a bad thing (especially if you need help in your biology class!)

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- Don’t forget to send your final high school transcript to the college you are attending. They will need it before they allow you to enroll in the fall.
- Complete any other paperwork that the college sends you.
- Pay attention to the information you receive about registering for fall classes, and when fall orientation will be.
- It’s a good idea to work during the summer, if you are able, and to SAVE some money if you can. You might need the extra cash in the fall!
- Enjoy your summer, too! Your life is going to change a lot next year, and you will continue to mature quickly. Good luck!