

# College Options and Scholarship Services, LLC's

## Coaching Guide



College Options and Scholarship Services, LLC has 36 years of combined experience in college admissions and financing. This book, combined with our "Complete Guide to College Admissions and Financing" CD-ROM, is the best tool available for High School students and their parents to use as they plan for college.

A Step by Step, Month by Month, College Planning Guide for All High School Students.



# Coach's Guide – Freshman Year - Stage 1

## Freshman Year-4 Contact Hours

### First Quarter (1 Hour)

#### Student Pre-College Planning Guide

- Begin planning and establishing career goals and aspirations. Take an *Interest Inventory*.
  - Google "interest inventories" to see several examples. Your coach can direct you to free sites as well as one that cost extra.
- Prepare, along with your high school counselor and parents, a four-year college preparatory curriculum.
  - Most colleges prefer a full load of Foreign Language, English, History, Science and Math each year of high school.
  - Two years (minimum) of **Foreign Language** courses
  - Strongly consider enrolling in Advanced Placement (AP), dual-credit, honors or accelerated classes when available.
- Seek volunteer opportunities in school and community (know requirements for graduation).
- Become involved in extracurricular activities of interest (quality over quantity).
- With the assistance of your *On Course to College Coach*, assess your learning style and develop good study habits. See a discussion of learning styles here:  
<http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSpaPage.html>
- Meet with your *On Course to College Coach* to fully understand the benefits of *My College Options.org* and how it can help successfully guide you to your college dreams.

**ACTIVITY:** Begin keeping a portfolio of all important high school work and achievements.

- Sit down with your *On Course to College Coach* and discuss the specific contents of your portfolio.
- The portfolio should be a hard-bound, 2 1/2-3" binder or computer files and should include the following:
  - A title page and a contents page to organize work through senior year.



- An introduction or school resume containing:
  - a personal mission statement and your worldview
  - school and career goals
  - GPA
  - class rank
  - test scores for either or both the ACT and SAT
  - a list of extra-curricular activities and leadership positions
  - volunteer projects
  - sports records
  - any jobs or internships you might have held
  - honors and recommendations you have received
- Letters of recommendation from teachers
- A copy of:
  - Your most recent transcript
  - Test scores
  - Special honors or achievement awards and certificates you have earned (most significant first)
  - A collection of essays/class papers that received high marks. This is where you can also place important research projects, art projects or similar items of vital importance.
  - At least one blank page at the end of the portfolio and/or a final statement



**What Next?** Meet with your high school counselor and discuss your 4-year plan. Set up your *My College Options* account <http://www.mycollegeoptions.org> and browse the site to become familiar with its benefits

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Be able to provide several *Interest Inventories* and know how to interpret them
  - The Strong Interest Inventory
  - <https://www.cpp.com/en/strongproducts.aspx?pc=153>
  - Sample Report here: <https://www.cpp.com/pdfs/smp284105.pdf>
  - The college edition report: <http://www.personalitydesk.com/products/career> (Cost \$49)
  - Free Career test at: <http://www.livecareer.com/>



- Career interest profiler here: <http://www.testingroom.com/> (\$19.95)
- Other career / personality profiles: <http://www.truity.com/>
- Be knowledgeable of the basic high school curriculum needs for different colleges popular in your area.
  - Have resources available to look up the requirements of other schools
  - Recommend using:
    - Baron's "Profiles of American Colleges"
    - Princeton Review's "The Complete Book of Colleges"
    - Fiske Guide to Colleges
    - The College Board's "College Handbook"
    - Peterson's "Four-Year Colleges"
    - The Big Book of Colleges
- Be able to provide several learning style evaluations and know how to interpret them
  - [http://linkup.tafesa.edu.au/learning\\_styles\\_evaluation.html](http://linkup.tafesa.edu.au/learning_styles_evaluation.html)
  - <http://sunburst.usd.edu/~bwjames/tut/learning-style/>
  - <http://www.personal.psu.edu/bxb11/LSI/LSI.htm>
  - <http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>
  - <http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#Interactive%20Learning%20Styles%20Test>
  - <http://marciaconner.com/assess/learningstyle/>
- Become familiar with the content on [MyCollegeOptions.org](http://MyCollegeOptions.org)

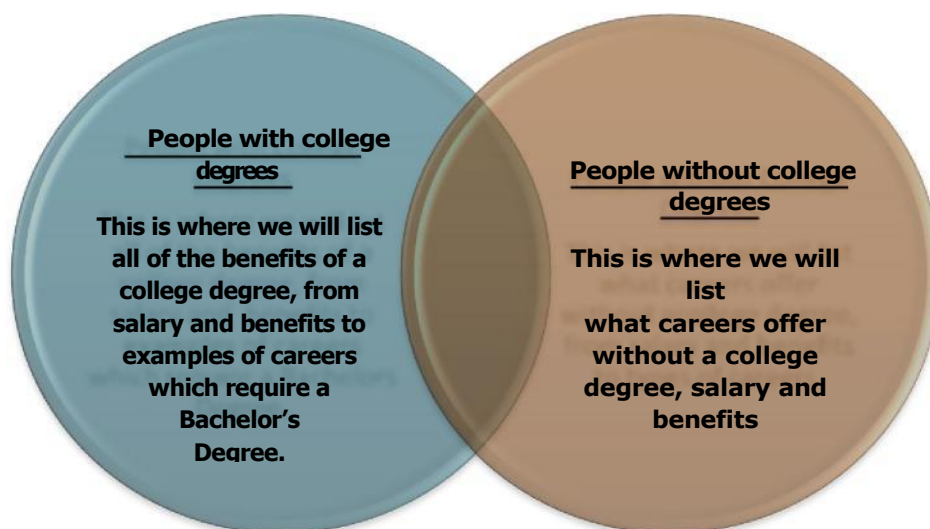


## Second Quarter (1 Hour)

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from first quarter with your coach- Review course selections for second semester and review portfolio.**

### Why College?

**ACTIVITY:** With guidance from your coach, create a Venn diagram of goals and salaries a person is likely to reach with a college degree, and goals and salaries a person is likely to reach without a college degree.



Visit the website: <http://www.unt.edu/pais/howtochoose/why.htm> for information on why to go to college.

### Realty vs. Myth

**ACTIVITY:** Decide if each of the statements below is a Truth or a Myth. Discuss with your Coach.

\_\_\_ **The most important admissions criteria considered by colleges are your SAT/ACT scores.**



\_\_\_ Senior year courses are not as important as junior year courses from the college's perspective.

\_\_\_ If your parents earn a "good" income you will not qualify for financial aid at most colleges.

\_\_\_ Most colleges accept both the *ACT* and the *SAT* testing.

\_\_\_ It is a good idea to narrow down your list of college choices prior to applying.



**What Next?** Research careers of interest and find out the required and preferred education level and experience needed for each. Click on this link <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Develop list of resources/websites to be able to link professions/jobs to major & degree required
  - <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>
  - <http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/CareerHandouts.shtml>

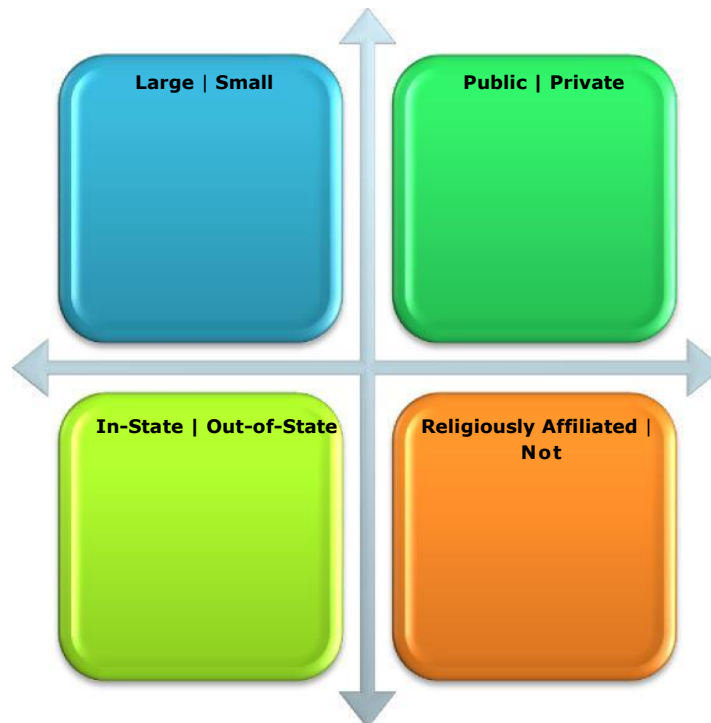


### Third Quarter (1 Hour)

*Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from second quarter*

#### Finding Information on Colleges

**ACTIVITY:** View comparison charts of different college environments and choose environments which best suit your preferences.



Consider each topic heading above and make a list of what appeals most to you. You may even include distance from home, liberal arts colleges, university style, size of the institution, community or junior college, specialty colleges, single-sex schools or schools with a religious focus. Your coach can assist you in finding specific information about colleges that fit your requirements.



**What Next?** Search for colleges that meet the criteria you discovered you prefer in a school. Find at least five colleges matching your preferences.



## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Have resources to assist student's initial college selection criteria
  - Baron's Profiles of American Colleges
  - Princeton Review's "The Complete Book of Colleges"
  - Fiske Guide to Colleges
  - The College Board's "College Handbook"
  - Peterson's "Four-Year Colleges"
  - The Big Book of Colleges





## Fourth Quarter (1 Hour)

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from third quarter**

### Scholarships

\*The following activity will require internet access.

**ACTIVITY:** Understanding the Expense Related to a College Education.

- Set up a *FastWeb* account <http://www.fastweb.com/> and *Scholarship America* account <http://scholarshipamerica.org> Your *On Course to College* Coach will walk you through the sites and explain all of the benefits of using *FastWeb*, *My College Options*, and *Scholarship America*.
- Seek out and enter essay, speech, science and other types of contests.
  - Most of these offer high school awards and many offer cash scholarships
  - These types of awards are great to list in your portfolio for later college applications
- With the help of your coach, begin making plans for starting or continuing to save for college.

### Summer Plans

- Seek out summer opportunities.
  - Jobs, volunteer positions, internships, activities
  - Talk to your high school counselor about summer school programs offered at colleges for high school students.
- Begin a summer reading list. It is always better to keep as much knowledge fresh as possible.



**What Next?** Research local or area contests of interest to enter. Determine the deadlines for entering competitions and the dates of contests. Keep a log of dates in your binder.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Be familiar with the content on the following websites pertaining to obtaining scholarships:
  - <http://www.fastweb.com/> asks you to describe yourself, and the website will automatically find scholarships that best match your interests.



- <http://www.scholarships.com/> helps students find money for college, while being discovered and recruited by schools.
- <http://www.guaranteed-scholarships.com/> lists scholarships that require no interview, essay, portfolio, audition, competition or other "secondary" requirement.
- <http://www.studentscholarshipsearch.com/> provides students and parents with a free searchable database of college scholarships and grants. No registration is required and new scholarships are updated daily.
- <http://www.petersons.com/college-search/scholarship-search.aspx> can help students find college scholarships.
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search> helps students find scholarships, other financial aid and internships from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly \$6 billion.
- [https://www.cfnc.org/paying/schol/info\\_schol.jsp](https://www.cfnc.org/paying/schol/info_schol.jsp) provides a grant and scholarship search for state and national scholarships.
- <http://www.aie.org/scholarships/> allows students to search their database of over 15,000 scholarships.
- <http://www.meritaid.com/> is a comprehensive directory of merit scholarships and academic scholarships from colleges across the country.
- <http://www.zinch.com/scholarships/search> offers personalized matches to over \$1.9 billion in scholarships.

Be familiar with the content on the following websites pertaining to obtaining financial aid:

- <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> hosts the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. You will need to download and submit the application as soon as possible after January 1<sup>st</sup> if you plan to request financial aid. You will need your tax information to complete the form.
  - <http://www.finaid.org/> provides a brief description of scholarships, grants, loans, and other types of aid including what they are, where to find them, and how to apply for them.
  - <http://www.iefaf.org/> is a resource for financial aid, college scholarship and grant information for US and international students wishing to study abroad.
  - <http://www.simpletuition.com/pay-for-college/> offer tips, advice, interactive tools and deals to help students plan for the cost of college.
- Be knowledgeable about 529 plans and other funding tools for college  
<http://www.irs.gov/uac/529-Plans:-Questions-and-Answers>



## Coach's Guide – Sophomore Year – Stage 2

### Sophomore Year-6 Contact Hours

*If you are just beginning, please go to Stage 1 (Freshman Year) and complete the work there before proceeding.* Be sure to set up your My College Options account at <http://www.mycollegeoptions.org> and browse the site to become familiar with its benefits.

### **Beginning of School Year-September (1 Hour)**

Discuss with your *On Course to College* coach your summer activities and what you accomplished related to your college preparation.

#### Student Pre-College Planning Guide :

- Review college preparatory curriculum with coach and assess current course schedule.
  - Assess academic strengths and weaknesses.
  - Remember:
    - Colleges look for Foreign Language courses.
    - Most colleges prefer a full load of Foreign Language, English, History, Science and Math each year of high school.
    - Rigor is extremely important.
- Continue building your portfolio.
- Now is the time to select extracurricular activities in which to get more involved. Think about taking on leadership roles—**leadership skills are an asset colleges consider heavily in the admissions process.**
- Review original goals set with your coach freshman year.
- Talk to your school counselor about registering and preparing to take the PLAN/PSAT.
  - These tests occur in October and either one or both will be taken at your school. Find out from your counselor which test(s) will be taken at your high school.
  - Review key points from either "[The Essential Guide to the ACT](#)" or "[The Essential Guide to the SAT](#)" or both.
  - Though the PLAN and PSAT are not the real tests, they are based on and organized like the real ACT and SAT, and they provide excellent practice for the actual tests you will take in your junior year.



**ACTIVITY:** Take the Jung- Myers Briggs Personality Typology Test

<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>

This activity will help you discover how your personality reflects your life, school, college, and future career possibilities and choices.



### What Next?

- Meet with your high school counselor to review and discuss your 4-year plan.
- Update as necessary, then review and discuss your progress with your parents.
- Update your *My College Options* account at [www.mycollegeoptions.org](http://www.mycollegeoptions.org)
- Review "The Essential Guide to the ACT" and/or "The Essential Guide to the SAT" for PLAN and/or PSAT. Take a practice test to prepare for either or both of these standardized tests.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Discuss and review the student's summer activities
- Review the student's course schedule and make suggestions for any changes/additions needed
- Discuss the importance of extra-curricular activities and make recommendations to the student
- Encourage the student to take the PLAN/PSAT test. Review our "Essential Guides" online content.
  - Practice for PSAT at: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html>
  - Practice for PLAN at: <http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest/>
- Have the student take a MBTI personality test



## Autumn-End of October/Beginning of November (1 Hour)

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from September with your coach.**

### **Finding Information on Colleges/Selecting the Right College for Returning Students:**

\*The following activity will require internet access.

**ACTIVITY:** Request information from colleges using the internet.

- Sit down with your coach to research possible colleges of interest using the internet as your primary resource.
- Begin keeping a personal college resource library/college binder. Refer to the "What Next?" for details.
- If you are interested in college athletics, review and discuss with your coach the sophomore section of the "Basic Year-by-Year Academic Primer" in the "[Understanding Athletic Recruiting](#)" guide. You should also begin reviewing this guide as a whole for future reference concerning athletics.
- With your coach and your parents, begin planning visits to colleges in the area.
  - Prepare a list of questions to ask once on campus. Talk to current college students if possible.  
<https://www.mycollegeoptions.org/Content/ForStudents/CollegeTips/MaximizeYourCampusVisit.aspx>
  - <https://www.mycollegeoptions.org/Core/SiteContent/Students/Advice/College-Resource-Center/College-Search---Selection/College-Selection/Visiting-College-Campuses.aspx>
- If the college you are interested in is local, find out about events you may be able to attend on campus to become more familiar with the campus and students. This includes concerts, plays, games, etc. to get you accustomed to life at college.

**What Next?** Begin building a personal college resource library and/or college binder.

- Once you begin receiving information from colleges, organize it in a way that it is easy to access, and keep it handy. (Ideas are shelves, a binder with pockets, a file drawer, or scan docs into computer files.)
- If using a college binder, it should be a three-ring binder, which will hold important information about particular schools of interest and what they offer. Label it in a way that makes sense to you- either by college, or by sections titled "campus expenses," "campus involvement opportunities," etc. You can create anything that will be easily accessed, followed, and understood by you!

Tip: Include your 4-year plan and checklist in the binder to keep you on track.



As you receive college information, create a pro/con list of the characteristics of each school such as-size, financial aid options, housing, etc.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Research colleges of interest to the student
  - Use the internet and the resources that you developed for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Freshman year
- Assist the student with the development of a college binder (or help develop a suitable on-line filing system)
- With the student, develop a list of pros and cons of the things the student finds important
- If the student is an athlete, refer to our athletic primer



## Just Before Winter Break-December (1 Hour)

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from Autumn.**

**Bring your college binders or computer files and pro/con lists to discuss with your coach.**

### College Financial Aid for Returning Students:

- Reality vs. Myth
- Discuss common myths about college costs, including GPA requirements, legacies, influential personal connections and athletics.
- Check in with your coach about your savings plan for college.
- Scholarship recap
- Discuss updating your [FastWeb.com](http://FastWeb.com) account.

### **ACTIVITY:** College Costs

- "Working to save" will involve students taking their previous college research information to create a bar graph detailing the college expenses of tuition, room and board, personal costs, book expenses, etc.
- Discuss with your coach ways to improve savings habits to cut college expenses for each category possible.  
Examples include buying books online, how to cut down on personal expenses, etc.



**What Next?** Update your *FastWeb* and *Scholarship America* accounts and search for scholarships now available to sophomores and new opportunities listed for your possible major.

Research local or area contests of interest to enter and deadlines/dates of competitions. Update the log you began in your binder.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Review reality vs. myth from Freshman year
- With the student, develop ideas on how to reduce college costs
- Update Fastweb and other scholarship sites, search out scholarships available to sophomores



## Winter-End of January (1 Hour)

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from prior to Winter Break.**

**Creative Options** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Part-time jobs, internships or job shadowing opportunities.
  - These options provide experience, possibly in your field of interest, and something to add to your college resume.
  - Additionally, the experience will be valuable if you seek work experience while in college.
  - <http://internships.about.com/od/internships101/a/whatisjobshadowing.htm>
- Volunteer in the community. Many college organizations volunteer in the community, and with previous experience you may be more eligible than others for leadership or organizational roles.
- Consider joining a civic group, club or professional organization in your area of interest.
  - Most organizations and clubs in communities offer a "student" membership status and if they happen to charge to become a member, they are often cheaper for students.
  - This allows more involvement in the community and more to add to your college resume.
  - Many area organizations have branches in other locations. Check the college or the cities of the colleges you are interested in to see whether they have these organizations. If so, you will have had previous experience with these groups in your hometown so you can become quickly involved in your new community.
- Consider options of how to shorten your time in college.
  - Shortening the amount of time you spend in college helps cut expenses tremendously.
  - If you take dual-credit or AP classes that allow you to take credit hours to college with you, they may already have enough credits to knock out an entire semester or years' worth of work, allowing you to potentially graduate early.





\*The following activity will require internet access.

**ACTIVITY:** Access a Career interest profiler and career values scale to assess the types of careers best suited for you - <http://www.testingroom.com/> or <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>

There will be a mini report for each which is free of charge, to give you a better understanding of your preferences for a future career.

### What Next?



Explore careers of interest on the internet. Discover the amount of education and training required for the careers you find.

### Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Review the career/interest activities completed Freshman year
- Reconnect to the Univ. of Tennessee and Rutgers content on Professions vs. Majors and Degrees
  - <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>
  - <http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/CareerHandouts.shtml>
- Become familiar with the reports from [www.TestingRoom.com](http://www.TestingRoom.com)



## Spring-Beginning of March (1 Hour)

***Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from Winter.***

### **Interview Skills** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Preparation for the Interview
  - You should be comfortable with the organization, group, company or details of the location with which you will be potentially interning before the interview.
  - Research online to find out more about where you are interviewing and come prepared with questions about the position or company.
- Creating an Effective Resume - Your coach will give examples of effective resumes while also addressing common mistakes.
- Catch the common mistakes that occur in interview settings before they happen!
- Time Management - The day of the interview is an important day to ensure that you are on time. This is not the day to be late if that is common for you, or to try an unknown "shortcut" to the interview, or to grab a bite to eat on the way. First impressions are important and it is not wise to be running behind for that first impression.
- Importance of Proper Language Skills - In an ever-changing English vocabulary, slang and acronyms are increasingly popular; however, proper grammar, sentence structure, and appropriate language are required to make a good impression on your potential employer.
- Apparel
  - Propriety and modesty are important when deciding what to wear to the interview.
  - Find out if the interview is casual, business casual or business attire in order to dress appropriately.
  - Ladies: if you wear a skirt, be sure to be conscious of how you are positioned throughout the interview.
- Good Posture
- Rehearse the "Yes/No Sir/Ma'am" rule
- Guide the Interview by Preparing a Resume. This should include academics, athletics, honors, awards, clubs, organizations and positions held, and your academic or educational goals statement.

**ACTIVITY:** Mock Interview



Your coach will act as the potential employer and you will practice the skills discussed above with the interview process to improve future interviews.

### What Next?

Create or update your resume. Explore the following websites to discover the top interview questions employers are most likely to use and the best way for you to answer them.



<http://www.saleshq.com/careers/articles/2206-15-toughest-interview-questions-and-answers?page=1&utmcontent=shr320090520capi&utmsource=nlet>  
<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest.htm>  
<http://bhuvans.wordpress.com/2006/08/19/50-common-interview-qa/>

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Become familiar with resume writing and what is considered effective and what are the common mistakes
  - <http://tulane.edu/hiretulane/students/resume.cfm>
  - <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/resume-writing-tips/>
  - <http://www.yale.edu/hronline/startcareer/resumetips.html>
  - <https://www.asme.org/career-education/articles/job-hunting/6-tips-for-writing-an-effective-resume>
- Review interviewing tips and techniques with the student
  - <http://msn.careerbuilder.com/msn/category.aspx?categoryid=IV>
  - <http://www.fastcompany.com/1839723/10-job-interview-tips-ceo-headhunter>
  - <http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20121121171031-20017018-the-perfect-job-interview-in-8-simple-steps>
  - <http://mycareer.deloitte.com/us/en/students/gettingthejob/interviewtips>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1ucmfPOBV8>
- Be prepared to critique "mock" interview



## End of School Year-May (1 Hour)

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from spring.**

### Military Options

- If you are considering the military the most important preparation is to get involved with school organizations and activities, get involved in your community, and work hard in school.
- **Military Academies** If you are considering a future with a military academy, be aware of the competition, but also understand the benefits for college when being a part of the military.
- **Reserves/Guard/ROTC** Understand the benefits of these programs concerning tuition assistance, fee waivers, GI Bill options, loan repayment programs, part-time work options, scholarships.
- **Active Duty**
  - Realize and understand that this is probably not your best action to take if you want to go to college directly after completing high school.
  - Requires 2-6 years of active duty.
- **Senior Military Colleges** There are numerous senior military colleges to look into for the option of attending college while being within the military environment and profession as well.

**ACTIVITY:** Look into the Reserves/Guard/ROTC, Active Duty, and Military Colleges to create a Venn diagram comparing the similarities and differences each one offers.

### Summer Plans

- Seek out summer opportunities.
  - Jobs, volunteer positions, internships, activities.
  - Speak to your high school counselor about summer school programs offered at colleges for high school students.
- Begin a summer reading list. It is always better to keep as much knowledge fresh as possible.



**What Next?** Research predominate and influential people who have taken the military route to the career of your interest to gain added perspective to the military option.



## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Discuss the student's summer plans and make suggestions as needed.
- Make sure the student has a summer reading list



## Coach's Guide – Junior Year – Stage 3

### **Junior Year - 11 Contact Hours for Returning Students**

If student is just beginning, please go to Stage 1 (Freshman Year) and have the critical items completed before proceeding.

If student has not yet completed Stage 2 (Sophomore Year), please have them do so before proceeding.

Be sure to set up your My College Options account at <http://www.mycollegeoptions.org> and browse the site to become familiar with its benefits.

### **September**

***Discuss previous summer activities and how the activities apply to your college preparation plans with your On Course to College coach.***

### **Student Pre-College Planning Guide :**

- Review class schedule with your coach, making sure classes are challenging and in line with graduation and college admissions requirements.  
This is the year your classes will carry significant weight. Your grades will either help or hurt you. Use this time to make up some ground if you have fallen behind at all in classes. Really stretch and challenge yourself with a strong, rigorous course load.
- Continue building your high school work and achievements portfolio.
- Seek opportunities for leadership roles in extracurricular activities.
- Develop and maintain good study habits and time management skills and make wise social choices—your coach can provide tips and strategies.
- Consider joining the Academic Team if your school offers one.
- Consider taking the ASVAB as a career assessment tool. This test will be administered in November.

**ACTIVITY:** Review high school portfolio and figure out which areas need improvement or changes.

**2nd ACTIVITY:** Review original goals set freshman year and update them as necessary.





**What Next?** Meet with your high school counselor to review and discuss your 4-year plan. Update as necessary, then review and discuss your progress with your parents. Help colleges find you! Update your *FastWeb*, *Scholarship America* and *My College Options* accounts. Contact your top schools to request further information. When considering the types of colleges you are looking to attend, the following web sites may be helpful. These are links to colleges and programs by state, alphabetical name, geographic location, and by majors:

<http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ>

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html>

Get free information on the college of your choice:

<http://www.mycollegeoptions.org>

Here is a great list of questions to ask when visiting or being visited by a College Representative:

<http://www.coc.cc.ca.us/offices/transfercenter/questions.asp>

Review "[The Essential Guide to the ACT](#)" and/or "[The Essential Guide to the SAT](#)" for upcoming tests. Take a practice test to prepare for the above standardized tests

### **Staying on Track...**



*\*This added feature allows you to keep track of other things that need to be focused on as college really begins to approach, though these are not main topics discussed for the month.*

- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Begin attending local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.



- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in October. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in October. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Begin meeting with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors-update your *FastWeb* account to find newly available scholarships.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Be familiar with the ASVAB tool and content
  - <http://official-asvab.com/index.htm>
- Be familiar with tools measuring effective study habits and time management
  - <http://www.studygs.net/enews/>
  - <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2009/10/14/top-12-time-management-tips>
  - <http://collegelife.about.com/od/academiclife/a/timemanagement.htm>





## October

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from September.**

### **Selecting a Major** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Investigate and explore career areas of interest to help narrow down a career and education path.
- Discuss your ambitions with your coach to help focus on an appropriate degree field. What interests you about that type of degree? For example, if you are interested in science, what do you prefer? Chemistry? Biology? Physics?
- Research degree requirements for careers of interest—your coach will direct you to appropriate resources.
- Determine the amount of outside class preparation time required for different majors of interest by contacting the college or speaking with students who are currently in that major.

**ACTIVITY:** Q&A session concerning the narrowing down of choosing a major. Answer a series of questions if you are unsure about your interests to help narrow down your choices



**What Next?** Look over your compiled information on colleges and find the schools with your areas of interest and preferred majors. Make a list of these schools and rank them

### **Staying on Track...**



If you are taking the SAT or ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.

- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in November. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives who visit your high school.



- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Assist the student research colleges and majors
  - Baron's Profile of American Colleges
  - The College Board's "Book of Majors"
  - <https://majormatch.com/> (added expense)
  - <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>
  - <http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/CareerHandouts.shtml>



## November

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from October.**

### **Finding Information on Colleges/Selecting the Right College Returning Students:**

- Determine the ACT/SAT scores required or desired by your colleges of interest. Do your scores add up?
  - If you have not taken the ACT/SAT yet or wish to raise your score further, register for upcoming tests and/or take an ACT/SAT prep course.
  - With assistance from your coach, schedule campus visits to your top choice colleges. Prepare a list of questions to ask once on campus. See this link for suggestions:  
<http://www.canyons.edu/offices/transfercenter/questions.asp>
  - Talk to current college students, if possible.
- If the college that you are interested in is local, find out about events you may be able to attend on campus to become more familiar with the campus and students. This includes concerts, plays, games, etc. to get you accustomed to life at college.
- If interested in college athletics, your *On Course to College* coach should discuss with you the junior section of the "Basic Year-by-Year Academic Primer" in the "[Understanding Athletic Recruiting](#)" guide.
- Begin reviewing this guide as a whole for future reference concerning athletics.

**ACTIVITY:** Create a "Top 10" list of colleges. Weigh the pros and cons of all schools to make an accurate list.



**What Next?** Start or continue researching the admissions criteria of your top schools to better prepare yourself for senior year.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.



- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Review the competitiveness of the student vs. the colleges desired – coach for alternates if needed
  - SAT/ACT Scores
  - Class Rank
  - GPA
- Assist the student with evaluating the pros and cons of their choices



## December

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from November.**

**Bring your college binders or computer files and pro/con lists with you for discussion.**

### **College Costs-Financial Aid/Packaging/Scholarships:**

- Review costs involved with college and why college costs are what they are for each institution you are interested in attending.
- Consider your major and what the added costs will be of that major. Include books, possible lab fees, etc.
- Discuss personal expenses and how to cut costs in this category.
- Be aware of extra fees for college - This includes parking tags, student ID fees, etc.
- Research materials, websites and books, to look into how much it will cost to study abroad if that is something you are interested in pursuing.
- Explore top schools' costs and the scholarships each can give you.
  - This will be based on test scores, what sport you will be playing (if any), music scholarships, etc.
  - Your *On Course to College* coach will help you with this process.
- Discuss new scholarships found and offered for juniors online and on [FastWeb.com](http://FastWeb.com).
- Review and discuss with parents plans for continuing to save for college.
- Recognize the importance of having admissions, scholarship and financial aid information from all of your top schools.
- Review our Financial Aid video [HERE](#)
- Review our Scholarship video [HERE](#)

### **What Next?**

- If you have not done so yet this year, update your *FastWeb* account and search for scholarships now available to juniors and new opportunities listed for your possible major.
- Research local or area contests of interest to enter and deadlines/dates of competitions.



## Staying on Track...



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this winter, the next test is in February. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this winter, the next test is in January. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.
- Plan your class schedule for next semester.
- Over break, update your high school portfolio as necessary.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Assist students research the various merit-based scholarships available for each of the schools to which they are interested in applying. School websites are the best resource for this information as well as the financial aid office.



## January

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from December.**

### College Entrance Exams

- Obtain a calendar of testing dates from your guidance office or your coach:
  - The ACT is always in September, October, December, February, April and June.
  - The SAT is always in October, November, December, January, March, May and June.(Specific days change each year; you can find the dates on the [ACT](#) and [SAT](#) websites).
- If you have not taken the ACT/SAT yet, or want to raise your previous scores, look into taking an ACT or SAT prep course to help prepare.
- REMEMBER: Deadlines for testing dates always fall a month ahead of the test date.
- It is not uncommon for juniors and seniors to take the SAT and/or ACT multiple times over these final two years of high school.
- In addition to the ACT/SAT, some colleges offer CLEP tests that can allow the students to test out of some lower level courses while earning college credit at the same time. Find out which schools on your list offer this opportunity.

### **ACTIVITY:** "Tips for Succeeding on the ACT/SAT"

- As many sources such as the *Princeton Review* indicate, there are approaches a student can take when taking the ACT and SAT: clues, hints and ways to read between the lines.
- Your coach will explain some of these tips and provide you with examples before you test yourself.

### **What Next?**



- Besides taking practice tests, be sure to play "[Zero Hour Threat](#)" to have a more interactive way of approaching the SAT/ACT questions.
- If you have not already taken the ACT or SAT, or did not like your previous scores, be sure to sign up for at least one spring date to take one or both of the exams.



### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this winter, the next test is in February. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this spring, the next test is in March. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.
- Be sure to meet with your counselor to discuss your academic progress and to begin to planning for fall courses.

### **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Research and become familiar with the tips and techniques for taking the standardized tests (SAT/ACT)
  - Coach the student on these techniques.
  - Review our "Essential Guides" online content.





## February

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from January.**

**Writing Effective Essays** (View our video on essays [HERE](#))

\*Bring previously written essays to this session.

- When writing effective essays, it is important to remember to use proper writing habits. You do not write as you speak.
  - The use of language and vocabulary is important.
  - Do NOT use contractions in your essays.
- Grammar and spelling are especially important when writing essays. Some colleges and possible job or internship locations may notice multiple grammar and/or spelling errors and decide to immediately move on to the next candidate without further notice to the student.
- Proofreading is the key to successful essays! Always read over what you have written, and read out loud. You will catch more errors doing this. It is extremely important to have someone proofread your essay.
- Review the key components to effective essays.
  - Introduction with a thesis statement.
  - Body with at least three topics relating to and emphasizing the thesis.
  - Conclusion that ties the whole essay together and shows the writer remains true to the thesis.

**ACTIVITY:** Review old essays and break them down to identify errors. Using one of your old essays as an example, write the thesis, the main points of the essay and the conclusion to learn how to identify these aspects of an essay.

### What Next?



- Begin using the strategies you learned this month and apply them to upcoming essays for school. This will prepare you for your college entrance essay as well as for writing papers for college.
- For schools and military academies that are now accepting early action and early decision students, this is the time to apply! If you go this route, it is important to remember that this choice will be binding and if accepted, you will not be allowed to apply to other schools. Think wisely.



## Staying on Track...



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this spring, the next test is in April. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this spring, the next test is in March. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.
- Plan on visiting more schools that you have not had the chance to see this spring break.
- Apply for early action/decision with schools of your choice if that option is available.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Make sure you are familiar with writing proper college essays
  - <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/essay-questions.aspx>
  - <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2010/09/15/10-tips-for-writing-the-college-application-essay>
- Assist the student by proofreading (not writing or editing) their essays



## March

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from February.**

### **Creative Options :**

Recap and review:

- The importance of finding part-time jobs, internships or job shadowing opportunities
- The benefits of volunteering in the community.
- The variety of civic groups, clubs, organizations available and benefits of joining
- Will you shorten your time in college?

**ACTIVITY:** Discuss with your coach your previous experience with using creative options. How was this experience? What improvements or changes could you make to these types of involvements? How will you get more involved now?



### **What Next?**

Explore careers of interest on the internet. Discover the amount of education and training required for the careers you find if you have not already done so previously. Find different creative options with which you can get involved.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this spring, the next test is in April. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this spring, the next test is in May. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

No additional items this month



## April

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from March.**

### Interview Skills :

#### **ACTIVITY:** Mock Interview

- Your coach will act as the potential employer and you will practice the skills previously learned.
- Recap and Review:
  - How to prepare for an interview:
    - Review how to research a company, organization, or school and how to prepare yourself for the different types of interviews.
    - Things to know for an interview with a school
    - Things to know for an interview with a potential employer
    - Things to know for an interview with a volunteer program
  - The resume
  - Common mistakes and how to prevent those mistakes.
  - Time Management
  - Proper language, posture and apparel

### Summer Plans

- Seek out summer opportunities.
- Jobs, volunteer positions, internships, activities  
<http://internships.about.com/od/internships101/a/whatisjobshadowing.htm>
- Speak to counselor about summer school programs offered at colleges for high school students.
- Begin a summer reading list. It is always better to keep as much knowledge fresh as possible.

### **What Next?**

- Update your resume.
- Write a short bio about yourself and rehearse it in front of your mirror or family members to prepare for interviews. Your *On Course to College* coach is an excellent resource for this activity.
- Explore the following websites to discover the top interview questions employers are most likely to use and the best way for you to answer them.
- [http://www.saleshq.com/careers/articles/2206-15-toughest-interviewquestions-and-answers?page=1&utm\\_content=sh\\_r3\\_20090520\\_capi&utm\\_source=nlet](http://www.saleshq.com/careers/articles/2206-15-toughest-interviewquestions-and-answers?page=1&utm_content=sh_r3_20090520_capi&utm_source=nlet)
- <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest.htm>  
<http://bhuvans.wordpress.com/2006/08/19/50-common-interview-qa/>



## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Conduct a "mock" interview
  - <http://collegeapps.about.com/od/theartofgettingaccepted/tp/college-interview-questions.htm>
  - [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505145\\_162-37241584/can-you-answer-these-13-college-interview-questions/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505145_162-37241584/can-you-answer-these-13-college-interview-questions/)
  - <http://goseecampus.com/Prepare-for-Your-College-Interview>
- Review "common mistakes" and tips
  - <http://collegeapps.about.com/od/theartofgettingaccepted/tp/college-interview-donts.htm>
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies>
- Review things to know for an interview with a school, with a potential employer, with a volunteer program
- Critique the student's short bio about themselves



## May

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from April.**

### **Military Options :**

- Topics to discuss:
  - Service branches and benefits
  - Credit and bonus programs
  - Enlistment options
  - Academies and ROTC scholarships
  - Test taking strategies for the military
  - Packaging college military options
  - Negative aspects of joining the military

**ACTIVITY:** Discuss previous ASVAB scores and compare them with your military options.



**What Next?** Speak with a recruiter if you are interested in joining the military.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this summer, the next test is in June. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this summer, the next test is in June. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.
- Plan visits to the last of your colleges over the summer months if you have any remaining, or plan a second visit to some of your top schools.
- Once school is out for the summer, update your high school portfolio.
- Stay active this summer! Read; take classes and/or work, intern, or job shadow.

### **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

No additional items this month



## June

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from May.**

### **The Application and Admissions Process** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Understand that more students are applying for college than ever before. Therefore, there is greater competition. It is possible to have a great ACT/SAT score and be very involved just like the next person, but if that other student also has a high ACT/SAT score and an even higher GPA, the other student's chances are higher at getting into college. This is why it is critical that you stay on top of your coursework and remain involved all through high school.
- Plan visits to the last of your top schools if you have not already done so. Consider visiting backups as well.
- Research and become familiar with college admissions requirements for these schools.
  - For example, the specific requirements of the essay (if required), if they require personal interviews, etc.
  - Discover test score and GPA minimums requirements for your top schools
  - Do your top schools accept the common application?
  - What are the application fees for your top schools?
- Information for filling out the application:
  - Be on time. Know the deadlines.
  - Use black ink because your application will be photo copied.
  - Follow all of the instructions.
  - Be sure to send your official transcripts and references-neither can have broken seals on the envelopes.
- Know what the common application is and how to complete it. More and more students are beginning to use the common application.
- Be able to support and defend your rationale for your choice of courses and activities while in high school should admission staff ask these types of questions.

\*The following activity will require internet access.

**ACTIVITY:** Go online to the Admissions page of your top schools you plan to visit over the summer. See if any of them have summer events and register for those that you will be able to attend.





### What Next?

- Research the admission requirements of your top schools; again, looking at score and GPA minimums, as well as whether or not they accept the common application.
- To be prepared senior year, check to see when your top school application deadlines fall.

### Staying on Track...



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in September. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in October. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Assist the student with planning for the application and admissions process
- Make sure they have scheduled some campus visits. Refer students to these tips for campus visits:
  - <http://www.ecampustours.com/for-students/college-planning/choosing-a-college/the-campus-visit.aspx#.UIYSrINWI9Z>
  - [http://www.ecampustours.com/for-students/college-planning/choosing-a-college/tips-for-visiting-college-campuses.aspx#.UchoCdjhF\\_AVisit.htm](http://www.ecampustours.com/for-students/college-planning/choosing-a-college/tips-for-visiting-college-campuses.aspx#.UchoCdjhF_AVisit.htm)
  - <http://collegeapps.about.com/od/choosingacollege/tp/8-Tips-for-a-Campus-Visit.htm>





## July

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from June.**

### **General Rules for College Success to Practice your Senior Year**

- Get and stay organized!!! This is important to do while in high school to prepare you for the organization you will need once in college.
- Ways to seek out good study locations:
  - Practice this now, before you have to begin sharing a dorm room in a year's time.
  - If you have trouble concentrating with noise, start practicing reading and focusing with music on. Or, if you easily fall asleep when it is silent, again, practice over and over again until you can accomplish new ways to study.
- Sit up-front in classes.
  - Once in college, especially if you attend a large school, it is important to be seen and heard by your professor. You will be asking your teachers for recommendation letters for various reasons- establishing a solid relationship with your high school teachers will help you in the long run for multiple reasons.
  - Write down and keep track of your goals.
  - Goals are very important. You do not want to get into college and lose sight of the end-goal you had while in high school because you partied too much, met a new group of friends, or took on too many responsibilities. Keep your goals visible.

**ACTIVITY:** Discuss all of the above topics with your coach, determine which of these you already do, and determine the effectiveness. If you are lacking in any of the above, discuss how to improve these rules to success for yourself. Make a plan!



**What Next?** If you have not already invested in a day planner, do so now! This will help you on your road to success and organization.



## Staying on Track...



- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in September. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in October. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for juniors.
- Prepare yourself for entering into your final year of high school; this is not the time to relax. In fact, it is just about to get a little crazier! But... that is a good thing. It means that your dreams of college are quickly approaching!

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

No additional items this month



## Coach's Guide – Senior Year – Stage 4

### **Senior Year-11 Contact Hours**

*If you have not yet completed Stages 1, 2, or 3, please do so before proceeding.*

Be sure to set up your My College Options account at <http://www.mycollegeoptions.org> and browse the site to become familiar with its benefits.

### **August**

***Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from July.***

### **Student Pre-College Planning**

#### **Guide:**

- Continue taking challenging school courses and solid elective classes through your final year.
  - This is NOT the time to slack off in your studies. Your grades, even second semester, will be important for scholarships. Plus, the college of your choice will want copies of your final transcripts to ensure you are still eligible to attend the institution.
  - Look into dual-credit courses through a local or semi-local university. (your coach can assist you)
- Continue building your high school work and achievements portfolio for college and scholarships throughout the year.
  - Make certain to highlight leadership roles in extracurricular activities when applicable.
  - Make sure you update your title and contents page before submitting.
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendation to add to the portfolio and for applying to college in general.
- Continue practicing good time management skills and study habits, and making wise social choices.

**ACTIVITY:** Review your high school portfolio to determine which areas need improvement or changes.



**2nd ACTIVITY:** Review original goals set freshman year and update as necessary.

### **Military Options**

- *This portion will be optional for the returning student and will only be reviewed if he/she is interested in this subject, or has reconsidered joining the military.*
- **Topics to discuss with your coach:**
  - Service branches and benefits
  - Credit and bonus programs
    - Enlistment options
  - Academies and ROTC scholarships
  - Test taking strategies for the military
  - Packaging college military options
  - Negative aspects of joining the military

### **What Next?**



- Meet with your high school counselor to review and discuss your 4-year plan. Update as necessary, then review and discuss your progress with your parents.
- Your *On Course to College* coach can provide a senior year checklist to keep you on track this year, month by month.
- Update your *FastWeb* and *My College Options* accounts.
- If interested in the military, speak with a recruiter.
- Review "[The Essential Guide to the ACT](#)" and/or "[The Essential Guide to the SAT](#)" for upcoming tests. Take a practice test to prepare for the tests above.

### **Staying on Track...**



*\*This added feature allows the student to keep track of other things that need to be focused on as college really begins to approach, though these are not main topics discussed for the month.*

- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.



- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in October. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in October. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors-update your FastWeb account to find newly available scholarships.

### **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Be prepared to discuss dual-credit courses and A/P courses
- Develop a detailed timeline for the student's senior year – a month by month check-list of things to do



## September

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from August.**

### College Entrance Exams

- Know when testing dates are:
  - The ACT is always in September, October, December, February, April and June.
  - The SAT is always in October, November, December, January, March, May and June.
  - Specific days change each year, be sure to look up those dates!
- If you have not taken the ACT/SAT yet, or want to raise your previous scores, look into taking an ACT or SAT prep course to help you prepare.
- Remember that deadlines for testing dates always fall a month ahead of the test date.
- Realize that it is not uncommon for seniors to take the SAT and/or ACT multiple times over this final year of high school.
- Besides the ACT/SAT, some colleges offer CLEP tests that can allow you to test out of some lower level courses while earning college credit at the same time. Be sure to look into which schools on your list offer this opportunity.

### **ACTIVITY:** "Tips for Succeeding on the ACT/SAT"

As many sources such as the *Princeton Review* indicate, there are approaches a student can take when taking the ACT and SAT: clues, hints and ways to read behind the lines. Your coach will explain some of these tips and show examples before you take a practice test with sample questions based on the tips you reviewed.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Activity:** Discuss whether or not previous ACT/SAT scores have improved and what you did to improve your scores.

### Writing Effective Essays.

*\*You will need to bring previously written essays to this session.*

- When writing effective essays, it is important to remember to use standard writing habits. You do not write as you speak.



- The use of language and vocabulary is important.
- Do NOT use contractions in your essays, ever.
- Grammar and spelling are especially important when writing essays. Some colleges and possible job or internship locations may notice multiple grammar and/or spelling errors and decide to immediately move on to the next candidate without further notice to you.
- Proofreading is the key to successful essays! Always read over what you have written, and read out loud. You catch more errors doing this.
- Know the key components to effective essays.
  - Introduction with a thesis statement
  - Body with at least three topics relating and emphasizing your thesis.
  - Conclusion that ties the whole essay together and shows you remained true to your thesis.

**ACTIVITY:** Review old essays and break them down to identify errors and how to improve your writing skills. Using one of your essays as an example, you will write your thesis, your main points of your essay and your conclusion to learn how to identify these aspects of an essay.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Activity:** Review previous essays to the most recent essays written to discuss your progress and need for further improvements.

## **Interview Skills**

**ACTIVITY:** Mock Interview

- Your coach will act as the potential employer and you will practice the skills previously learned.
- Recap and Review:
  - How to prepare for an interview.
  - Review how to research a company, organization or school and how to prepare yourself for the different types of interviews:
  - Things to know for an interview with a school.
  - Things to know for an interview with a potential employer.
  - Things to know for an interview with a volunteer program.
  - The resume
  - Common mistakes and how to prevent those mistakes



- Time Management
- Proper language, posture and apparel

**Early Application** (To view our video, click [HERE](#))

- Talk to your coach about the *early application*.
- Discuss with your coach and understand the differences between early application and *early decision*.
- Recognize that the early decision process is usually permanent and you will pay an expensive fee to get out of early decision.



**What Next?**

- Besides taking practice tests, be sure to play "Zero Hour Threat" to have a more interactive way of approaching the SAT/ACT questions.
- If you did not like your previous ACT/SAT scores, be sure to sign up for at least one spring date to take one or both of the exams again.
- Update your resume.
- Write a short bio about yourself and rehearse it in front of your mirror or family members to prepare for interviews. Your *On Course to College* coach is an excellent resource for this activity.
- Explore the following websites to discover the top interview questions employers are most likely to use and the best way for you to answer them.

<http://www.saleshq.com/careers/articles/2206-15-toughest-interview-questions-andanswers?page=1&utmcontent=shr320090520capi&utmsource=nlet>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest.htm>



**Staying on Track...**

- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.





- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in November. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Review the tips and techniques for taking the standardized tests (SAT/ACT)
- Discuss the differences between early application and early decision and the advantages and disadvantages of both
- Revisit college interview information <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies>



## October

### **The Application and Admissions Process**

- Understand that more students are applying to college than ever before; therefore the competition is great. You can have a great *ACT/SAT* score and be very involved just like the next person, but if that other student also has a high *ACT/SAT* score and an even higher *GPA* than you did not stay on top of your coursework), his or her chances are higher at getting into college. You *must* work hard and stay focused to blow away the competition.
- Visit the last of your top schools if you have not already done so, maybe visit backups as well.
- Research and familiarize yourself with what colleges require.
  - For example, is an essay required, how long essay requirements are, if they require personal interviews, etc.
  - Discover what test score and *GPA* minimums are for your top schools
  - Do your top schools accept the common application?
  - What are the application fees to your top schools?
- When filling out the application...
  - Be on time. Know the deadlines.
  - Use black ink because your application will be photo copied.
  - Follow all of the instructions.
  - Be sure that you send your official transcripts and references; neither can have broken seals on the envelopes.
- Look into filling out [the common application](#). More and more students are beginning to use the common application.
- Be able to support and defend your rationale for your choice of courses/electives and activities in high school in case admission staff ask you these types of questions.

\*The following activity may require internet access.

**ACTIVITY:** Fill out college applications for the top schools in which you are interested.





## What Next?

- Research the admission requirements of your top schools; again, looking at score and GPA minimums, as well as whether or not they accept the common application.
- Check to see when your top school deadlines fall.
- Make a checklist for each school you are applying to in order to be fully sure you are getting in all of the proper information to each.
- Be sure to make copies of all of your important documents such as your driver's license. You may need to send in copies of these.

## Staying on Track...



- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.

## Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Begin completion process for all college applications. Pay special attention to the deadlines.



## November

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from October.**

### College Costs

- Recap costs involved with college and why college costs are what they are for each institution you are looking into attending.
- Consider your major and any added costs associated with that major. Discuss with your parents and your coach. Include books, possible lab fees, etc.
- Consider personal expenses and how to cut costs in this category.
- Account for extra fees for college: This includes lab expenses, parking tags, student ID fees, etc.
- Look into how much it will cost to study abroad if that is something you are interested in pursuing.

### **What Next?**



- If you have not done so yet this year, update your *FastWeb* and *Scholarship America* accounts and search for scholarships now available to seniors and new opportunities listed for your possible major.
- Research local or area contests to enter and record deadlines and dates of competitions.
- Obtain a list of local scholarships from your high school counselor, or have him/her explain to you how to access that page on your high school's website.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in December. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.



- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.

### **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

No additional items this month



## December

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from November.**

### **Appeals and Alternate Plans** (View our video [HERE](#))

- If you have been rejected by one of your top college choices, there is the option to go through the appeals process.
  - Be sure to talk to an admission counselor and tell him or her that you are appealing.
  - Explain to the Admission Office why you should have been accepted.
- If all else fails, you can always take the community college road first. Complete your first year and make great grades, proving that you are qualified to attend a 4-year college.

### **Appealing Award Letters**

- If you plan to appeal an award letter because you believe you deserve a greater amount, be sure to express this concern *before you* attend the college or university.
  - Explain a lack of income or other reasons why you think you deserve a greater amount.
  - Do not bring up other school offers for awards.

### **Selecting a Major** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Identify your areas of interest in terms of study and career to help narrow down a career and education path.
- Research degree requirements for careers of interest to you.
- Determine the amount of outside class preparation time is required for different majors of interest.
- Match your ambitions with a desired degree field of interest. What interests you about that type of degree? For example, if you are interested in science, what do you prefer? Chemistry? Biology? Physics?

### **Selecting the Right College**

**ACTIVITY:** Using all of your previously gathered information and acceptance letters, create pro/con lists of the schools which have accepted you to narrow down your choices and choose where you want to attend!





**What Next?** If you wish to go through the appeals process, now is the time to do so.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this winter, the next test is in February. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this winter, the next test is in January. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.
- Plan your class schedule for next semester.
- Over break, update your high school portfolio as necessary.

### **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Double check all deadlines
- Be familiar with the appeals process and development of alternate plans.



## January

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from December**

### Putting It All Together

- Now that it is January, this is the time to be sure you have completed the previous checklist, marking off everything that is needed to be turned into the colleges of your choice by this point. Your *On Course to College* coach will assist you with this activity.
- Make sure you fill out all necessary forms for any final applications or for colleges that have accepted you.

**ACTIVITY:** Narrow your schools of acceptance to a top five if you have been accepted to more than five.



**What Next?** Double-check to be sure that you have heard back from all of the colleges to which you have applied. If not, call them.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this winter, the next test is in February. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this spring, the next test is in March. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.

### Coach's Action Items and Follow up

- Reduce the number of colleges to apply to five (5), if the student has not used early application or early decision
- Closely review timelines/deadlines/timetables





## February

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from January.**

### Catch-Up Month

- February is the month to catch up on everything because first semester of senior year is very busy.
- Remember to fill out the [FAFSA](#) by the end of this month to increase the financial aid you will receive from your college choice. Once completed, keep your eyes out for the SAR (Student Aid Report) about four weeks later.
- Think about taking the ACT/SAT at least one last time if you still want that score higher for better scholarships.
- Update your high school portfolio for final spring scholarships.
- Write thank you notes to any teachers who wrote recommendation letters for you in your application packet.
- Continue researching and applying for scholarships. Your coach will help you with finding scholarships at the school you will be attending.
- Closely monitor checklists to stay up to date and current.
- Prepare for graduation! Be sure graduation announcements, cap and gown have been ordered.
- If you have accepted a college's acceptance offer, you will need to pay a deposit before space quickly fills up!



**What Next?** Complete anything from today's discussion that you have not done so far.



### **Staying on Track...**

- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this spring, the next test is in April. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this spring, the next test is in March. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.



- Plan on visiting more schools you have not had the chance to see this spring break.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- If not already, become familiar with the FAFSA process and deadlines
  - <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
  - CAUTION – fafsa.com is a commercial site and will charge you for assistance
- Assist as needed with the completion of the FAFSA
- Assist with applying for any merit-based scholarships for the schools where the student has been accepted



## March

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from February.**

**Creative Options** (View our video [HERE](#))

### **Returning Students:**

- Recap and review  
<http://internships.about.com/od/internships101/a/whatisjobshadowing.htm>
  - Importance of finding part-time jobs, internships or job shadowing opportunities, even as you prepare for graduation.
  - Volunteer in community
  - Join civic groups, clubs, organizations
  - Will you shorten your time in college?

**ACTIVITY:** Discuss with your coach your previous experience using creative options. How was your experience? What improvements or changes could you make to these types of involvements? How will you get more involved now?

### **Summer Plans**

- Seek out summer opportunities.
  - Jobs, volunteer positions, internships, activities
  - Speak to counselor about summer school programs offered at colleges for high school students.
- Create a summer reading list. It is always better to keep as much knowledge fresh as possible, especially as you are about to enter college.



**What Next?** Explore careers of interest on the internet. Discover the amount of education and training required for the careers you find if you have not already done so. Find different creative options with which you can get involved.



### **Staying on Track...**

- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.



- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this fall, the next test is in April. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this fall, the next test is in May. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.

### **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Review the pros and cons of each school that has accepted the student
- Review the financial aid and scholarships offered by each school
- Assist the student in making a final school decision



## April

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from March.**

### **Orientation Date and Important College Dates** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Find out when your college's orientation occurs.
  - Is it in the summer or just before school starts?
  - Check your schedule and mark the dates.
- Once you have decided on which college you plan to attend, look up which dates and holidays the school observes as days when there is no school in session.
  - If you go to a religiously affiliated school, you will most likely have more time off during the religious holidays than non-religiously affiliated schools.
  - Many private institutions do not recognize President's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day or other holidays such as Labor Day, as holidays where students do not have class. It is important to check if the college does or does not recognize national holidays.



**What Next?** Check the holidays and orientation dates at your college of choice. Make notes and be prepared for both.

### **Staying on Track...**



- If you are taking the ACT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this summer, the next and final test before college is in June. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this summer, the next test is in May. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.



## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Review the pros and cons of each school that has accepted the student
- Review the financial aid and scholarships offered by each school
- Assist the student in making a final school decision



## May

**Briefly discuss the "What Next?" from April.**

### **College Year-by-Year Success** (View our video [HERE](#))

- Set up a meeting and discuss with your high school counselor how to prepare for college.
- With assistance from your coach, set up a visit to your new college campus and meet with your department and/or advisor over the summer to discuss how to prepare.
- Make a checklist for the first semester of college.
- Discuss with your college advisor how to set up your class schedules to remain on track for college graduation.
- Discuss opportunities with your college advisor about how to get involved on campus, as well as off campus.
- Express to your college advisor your enthusiasm about being a new member of the department and explain that you want to take advantage of internship and or/study away opportunities.



**What Next?** Set up an appointment with your department and/or college advisor over the summer before fall classes begin.



### **Staying on Track...**

- If you are taking the SAT this month, be sure to take at least one practice test first.
- Attend local and regional college fairs, especially if your top schools will be at these events.
- If you plan to take the ACT this summer, the next and final test before college is in June. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- If you plan to take the SAT this summer, the next and last test before college is in June. Remember to sign up at least a month in advance.
- Meet with the college representatives that visit your high school.
- Search and apply for scholarships that are due within the next month for seniors.



- Plan to visit your new college over the summer months to familiarize yourself with the campus and to ask questions.
- Once school is out for the summer, update your high school portfolio for the final time.
- Stay active this summer! Read; take classes and/or work, intern, or job shadow.

## **Coach's Action Items and Follow up**

- Assist the student to prepare for success in college
  - Have student review College Success 101 in website material.
  - <http://collegelife.about.com/od/academiclife/a/timemanagement.htm>
  - <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2009/10/14/top-12-time-management-tips>

