



## Holy Family High School

# College Counselor

January 2012

by Mr. William P. Wilson

Volume XII Issue 7

**Seniors! Are your applications done?**

**All—Check [www.holyfamilyhs.com](http://www.holyfamilyhs.com) for college related content!**

**Juniors and parents! Call Mr. Wilson to schedule an appointment to discuss your college search.**

### College Applications

There are still a couple seniors who have college applications to finish. As we get later in the process of college admissions, due dates pass, schools become more selective, and opportunities can be missed. Any applications that have January or February deadlines should be done immediately. School/Counselor Report forms should be brought to the College Counseling Center for processing. Everything submitted to me in December was processed and sent out before the holiday break. Although colleges will accept transcripts and school reports which are sent separate from the student section, they will not accept things late! Carefully watch deadline dates.

### Mid-Year Reports

Any applications which are turned in to me now will include seventh semester grades. At this time, first semester grades are an official part of the permanent record. Many colleges will use these grades as part of their admission decision. Seniors should complete the mid-year transcript request form available in the counseling center if a college

requested their first semester grades.

### College Opportunity Fund

As you may be aware, a number of years ago our state legislature voted to create a College Opportunity Fund or voucher system for Colorado residents attending public colleges in the state (and some private colleges in the state but for Pell Grant eligible families only). This is your in-state tuition, and you must register for it on:

[www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)

This website is a free resource. It has tons of great information on all things college related.

### FAFSA and Profile

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed in order to be considered for financial aid at any college. The FAFSA should be filed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You are required to submit this form in order to qualify for need-based aid at any college or university. Considering the high cost of attending college, everyone is encouraged to take the time to

complete the FAFSA.

In order to file the FAFSA online, both the student and parent need a PIN. You can register for your PIN now at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).

Even though you may not have your tax work completed by February, it is important to get the financial aid applications done by mid-February. The priority filing deadline for most colleges is February 15th. It is acceptable to use estimated figures when completing the forms. Applications sent in late may not be fully considered for all types of aid.

You can contact the Financial Aid office at any institution to which your child has applied. Building a relationship with the Financial Aid office can be of great benefit to a family throughout the financial aid process. These professionals can make adjustments to your Expected Family Contribution based on special circumstances which may include tuition being paid for other children at private schools. (Public colleges will not take this into consideration.)

Be sure to complete the FAFSA care-

**College Information Night (includes return of PSAT & PLAN)**

**Wednesday, January 11th @ 6pm in Theater**

**All freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and their parents should attend.**

fully, completely, and promptly.

Be certain to check application materials or call the colleges to see if the *Profile* is also required. Many private colleges want this form completed. Registration materials for the *Profile* are also available in the College Counseling Center. Unlike the FAFSA, the *Profile* requires a fee for processing.

In a few cases, colleges have their own financial aid application as well. If so, then it will probably be part of the admission application or they will send it to you separately. If you have any questions, call either the college or myself.

## PSAT and PLAN Scores

The results of the PSAT and PLAN tests will be distributed to families who attend the college night on January 11th at 6p.m. and to those who do not attend during lunches later that week.

## Juniors

It is time to start planning for the SAT and ACT tests. I highly recommend that juniors take both of these tests **twice**. The first time should be late in the spring semester. The second time can be at the end of spring semester or in the fall. You can take them a third time in the fall of senior year if necessary. Most colleges will review a student using his/her best score from either test on any date.

Some juniors may also need to take the SAT II's, depending on the colleges they are considering. These are subject tests required by many highly selective colleges in addition to the SAT I. The ideal time for the SAT II's is in June of the junior year.

## Test Preparation

Often, students ask about the value of preparing for a standardized test or tell me that they are not good test takers. I am very quick to answer this by strongly encouraging students to prepare. The evidence is very clear on this point. Students who are more familiar with the test and have practiced sample

questions do better.

There are several ways to effectively prepare for the SAT and ACT. These include:

- Carefully read the suggestions and hints and take the sample test provided with the registration materials.
- Buy a test prep book that includes several sample tests at a local bookstore.
- Pick up any one of several computer software packages at a local retail store.
- Go online for advice and practice tests. (See the College Planning Handbook for a list of specific sites.)
- Take a preparation course that prepares you through lessons and practice.

HF may partner with a test preparation company to offer students a course at a discounted price. Contact me if you are interested.

Also, Kaplan has offered their online study for free to HF students. Contact me for more information.

Whatever method of preparation you choose, there must be a commitment to it. Sample tests, software, and courses only work if they are used. If you have any questions about any of these methods of preparation or if you want to discuss the specific needs of your son or daughter, please call me.

**All juniors should take both the SAT and ACT at least once before summer.**

## The College Search

Over the past few months, I have outlined the steps involved in conducting an effective college search. Now is the time to put that plan into action. Juniors need to make preliminary decisions on size, location, and level of selectivity of schools. It is important that they are not only comfortable with the col-

leges they choose but that the colleges provide them with an appropriate academic challenge.

Students are strongly encouraged to make campus visits and to make use of all available materials designed to help with the college search. We have reference books, guides, ratings books, videos, CDs, Internet access, college catalogs, financial aid resources, and an assortment of "how to" books that may be used here or borrowed.

## College Meetings

All juniors and their parents are expected to schedule a meeting with Mr. Wilson to discuss their college search. Please call or email soon.

## Net Price Calculator

All colleges should have a Net Price Calculator on their website. The calculator will allow you to enter your grades and test scores then will provide an estimate of merit-based scholarships you might receive. And, it will allow you to enter income and family information then provide you with an estimate of need-based financial aid.

### Test Dates

#### SAT

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Deadline
Mar. 10	Feb. 10	Feb. 24
May 5	Apr. 6	Apr. 20
June 2	May 8	May 22

#### ACT

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Deadline
Feb. 11	Jan. 13	Jan. 20
Apr. 14	Mar. 9	Mar. 23
June 9	May 4	May 18

#### AP

May 7—May 15

Registration materials for the SAT and ACT are available in the College/Career Center. Students may also register on-line at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).