



Holy Family High School

College Counselor

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Seniors

Among the many tasks facing seniors as they start their final year of high school is their college selection. The decision of where to attend college will have far reaching consequences for years to come. Careful thought and planning is essential throughout the process.

Seniors should complete the following by mid-September:

- Meet with me to discuss choices and map out the next steps.
- Create an activities resume.
- Work on personal statement.
- Decide to which colleges you plan to apply.
- Register for SAT and/or ACT. (See schedule.) Some students may also need to take the SAT II's.
- Make plans to visit colleges. You have October 12th, 14th, & 21st off school. These are great days for college visits!

Most colleges make their applications available on-line and prefer that you submit them that way. If required, be sure to print out forms like the Counselor/School Report, and submit them to me with your transcript request form. I strongly encourage students to complete at least one application by October 1st and all of their admission applications by December 1st.

Using the Web

The Internet is an extremely valuable tool for researching college and financial aid information. Doing an electronic college search, visiting college websites, taking virtual tours, finding scholarships, calculating need-based

financial aid eligibility, and applying electronically can be done using the Web. A list of websites that I have found to be especially worthwhile can be found under Academics then Guidance on the school website. There is a lot of college related content on the HF Guidance page!

New this year on most college websites is a Net Price Calculator. It will give you an estimate of scholarship and need-based financial aid.

SAT and ACT

Most colleges rely heavily on the results of the SAT and/or ACT for admission and scholarships. The best test result is typically used, so most students are encouraged to take both tests and to do so more than once. If the SAT II Subject Tests are also expected, then seniors may need to schedule those this fall.

Practicing for these tests is very important! Admission or a scholarship to the right college can far outweigh the time and effort spent on test preparation. Whether your son or daughter is a senior getting ready for the ACT and SAT or a junior preparing for the PSAT in October, the time to investigate options is now. If you have any questions about test preparation, do not hesitate to call me. There is no reason to spend a lot of money on this! **Taking practice tests is the best preparation!**

Conversations with the College Counselor

I am offering informal question and answer sessions for any and all interested parents. They will be held at 6 p.m.

on: October 6th, November 10th, February 2nd, & March 1st.

The major College Night presentation, with return of test scores, will be on January 11th.

I am available to meet with parents of seniors individually. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call me at 303-410-1411 x1119 or send an email to me at will.wilson@holyfamilyhs.com.

I hold junior parent meetings in the second semester! Please contact me in December or January to set up your appointment!

Fall Test Dates

SAT

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Deadline
Oct. 1	Sept. 9	Sept. 21
Nov. 5	Oct. 7	Oct. 21
Dec. 3	Nov. 8	Nov. 20

ACT

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Deadline
Sept. 10	Aug. 12	Aug. 26
Oct. 22	Sept. 16	Sept. 30
Dec. 10	Nov. 4	Nov. 18

Registration materials for the SAT and ACT are available in the College/Career Center. Students may also register on-line at www.collegeboard.com and www.actstudent.org.

PSAT and PLAN

On Wednesday, October 12th 10th & 11th will take the PSAT and 9th graders will take the PLAN.
On Tuesday, October 19th

Upcoming College Fairs

Jesuit Colleges, Sept. 7th @ Marriott-Tech Center; In-State College Fair, Sept. 15th @ Legacy; Out of State College Fair, Oct. 12th @ Monarch; College Workshop, Oct. 15th @ Cherry Creek

College Fairs

Over 250 colleges and universities will be represented at college fairs held at Monarch HS on October 12th, at Kennedy HS on October 13th, and at Cherry Creek on October 15th. There is also an in-state college fair at Legacy HS on September 15th! These fairs are specifically aimed at juniors and seniors, but will also prove valuable for underclassmen. This is an excellent opportunity to pick up admission materials and ask questions. The people representing each college are typically the ones who will read applications from this area. Students and parents from ALL high schools are welcome to attend these programs.

College Rep Visits

Beginning in September and continuing through most of the fall, college representatives will visit HFHS during the school day. Seniors and Juniors are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with these admission counselors. Students can learn a great deal and make valuable contacts at these meetings. Upperclassmen are required to complete a College Representative Visit Request Form in order to be released from class for these meetings. This form requires a signature (permission) from any teacher whose class time may be missed. Underclassmen are welcome to attend any meetings held during Access but are not to miss any class time.

Campus Visits

One of the most important ways to learn about a college is to visit, ideally when students are present on a regular class day. To arrange a campus visit, call the admission office at the college. Holy Family juniors and seniors are allowed two days of excused absences in order to visit college campuses. Completion of an Advanced Absence Form is required.

Often it is possible for seniors to stay in a residence hall as a guest. If an overnight stay is planned, be sure to give at least a two week notice. **Even if you have a friend or family member on campus, it is best to coordinate the visit through the admission office.** A

senior's visit should include an interview, a formal tour, and perhaps an opportunity to attend a class, talk to a professor or coach, eat a meal in the cafeteria. Also, plan some time to browse around on your own: visit the book store and student union. Make a point of talking with current students. They can tell you the "real" story.

Financial Aid

For some students, financial aid is a major factor in their college choice. **The fact is that at most colleges the majority of students do not pay the full cost.**

Over 90% of all financial aid is distributed directly from the colleges, both need-based and merit-based. Much of the need-based aid is federally funded, but colleges do supplement that. Most colleges have merit-based or scholarship aid which they offer to attract the best students among their applicants.

Need-based Aid is determined through the results of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form should be completed online (www.fafsa.ed.gov) in early February. An on-line 'EFC Estimator' can be found at www.finaid.org. The FAFSA will determine eligibility for federal loans and grants and also serves as a basis for college sponsored, need-based grants.

In addition, about 400 private schools will require you to file the PROFILE with the College Scholarship Service. profileonline.collegeboard.com. And, many schools have their own institutional form.

Check with the colleges to which your child is applying about the forms they require!

Merit-based Aid is occasionally awarded by a college after reviewing a student's application for admission. Generally, a separate application is not required. Specific information about such scholarships is distributed by the colleges in their publications and on their websites. As competition for students increases, so do scholarship opportunities. Tuition 'discounting' has become a matter of survival for some

colleges. It should be noted, however, that highly selective colleges are less likely to offer scholarships.

Outside Aid is aid provided by a third party. It represents a small but important part of what is available. Companies, civic organizations, unions, and foundations often sponsor such scholarships. The best resource for information about such awards is online. There are several websites, most notably www.fastweb.com, that contain an extensive database with a search feature. Eligibility, deadlines, addresses, and other details are provided for millions of private scholarships. A list of scholarships about which we receive information directly can be found in the counseling center and by clicking Counseling on www.holyfamilyhs.com.

Please understand that you do NOT need to pay to do a scholarship search. There are many private companies that attempt to sell such a service. In over fifteen years of college advising, I have never heard of anyone receiving a scholarship, of any sort, through a private search service. I do not recommend them.

Juniors

For juniors this is a critical year for several reasons. First and foremost is the importance of a good year academically. Since college applications go out in the fall of senior year, the junior grades are often the last ones that a college sees before making an admission decision. Second, this is an important year for testing. The PSAT is used to determine eligibility for National Merit scholarships, and the SAT & ACT (to be taken late in 2nd semester) will be important for college admission. Finally, much of the initial college research and preliminary decision making takes place in the junior year. Reading college guides and brochures, surfing the Web, visiting campuses, talking with representatives, and meeting with their counselor should help set a course of action for college selection. Watch this newsletter for more details. In addition, a very important college information night for juniors and their parents will be held in January.