

the parent path

Your high school student is starting to make important decisions about long-term interests and career goals. This timeline and checklist can help you to help guide your student throughout their search for the right college.

FRESHMAN YEAR

- ☐ Discuss the value of a good college education with your student.
- ☐ Create time and space for extended, well-paced study rather than short-term cramming.
- ☐ Discuss the impact of high school grades and course selection on college admission.
- ☐ Check curriculum requirements for college entrance.
- ☐ Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities, volunteering, internships or other work experiences.
- ☐ Talk with friends and family about their own college experiences.
- ☐ Plan for college expenses and explore savings options.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- ☐ Meet and make connections with your student's teachers and counselors.
- ☐ Talk with your student about their interests and career possibilities.
- ☐ Discuss the factors most important to your student when choosing a college, such as size, location, majors and related programs, special academic opportunities, athletics or the arts.
- ☐ Continue your support of extra-curricular involvement and leadership roles. Find out whether your student should take the pre-ACT or PSAT.
- ☐ As you explore college options with your student, return often to their websites for new information.
- ☐ Encourage a system for organizing correspondence with colleges.

JUNIOR YEAR

- ☐ With your student, develop and follow a plan for the college search. Augustana's "College Path Checklist" offers helpful guidelines.
- ☐ Attend information sessions and college nights sponsored by the high school.
- ☐ Consult with your student's school counselor for college search ideas and advice.
- ☐ Find out about scholarships and other financial aid available from the college, especially if the cost of attending seems out of reach.
- ☐ Provide support as your student prepares for and takes the ACT/SAT exams.

- ☐ Find out if your student should take Advanced Placement exams.
- ☐ Visit a variety of schools.
- ☐ Make sure your student is taking senior-year courses that can lead to a successful transition to college-level coursework.
- ☐ Network with other parents for information and support, and consider taking turns bringing students and friends to college visits.

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- ☐ Review college marketing and other correspondence with your student.
- ☐ Review ACT/SAT results and discuss whether your student should re-test. Some schools also accept test-optional applications.
- ☐ Encourage your student to explore online applications and think about essay responses.
- ☐ Continue visiting schools, from large public universities to independent liberal arts colleges, and choose different types of visit options.
- ☐ Develop a list of questions for colleges and take it with you on your visits. Augustana's "25 Questions to Ask a College" flier provides a good starting point.

SENIOR YEAR

- ☐ Help your student stay on top of application deadlines.
- ☐ Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on time, and meet any college deadlines for merit-based scholarships and need-based aid.
- ☐ Encourage your student to attend a class or two during another visit to the schools that spark interest.
- ☐ As required, schedule interviews.
- ☐ Remain open-minded as the short list develops, and supportive of your student's final choice.
- ☐ Send in the tuition deposit, and remind your student that it's courteous to notify all other schools that offered admission of your final decision.
- ☐ Connect with your student's college through their Facebook group for parents (other ways to connect), and enjoy a decision well made with your college-bound student.

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