

# COLLEGE PREP TIMELINE

## Freshman & Sophomores

- Take rigorous courses and earn good grades in your academic classes. Colleges look mainly at your performance in English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language.
- Take the PSAT in October. This will help you identify areas for improvement.
- Attend the Seminole State College College Fair
- Identify your Hooks (areas of special talent or concentration) and frame your high school activities around them.. The days of being involved in 20 different activities are gone. Select one or two activities that you really enjoy and pursue them with your whole heart, and contribute to making the organization better.
- Become familiar with college entrance requirements. Search the “admitted freshman profile” for your top colleges. This information will let you know what gpa and test scores you’ll need to be admitted to that college.
- Research college costs, scholarships, and other forms of financial aid. If you haven’t begun to save for college, do so as soon as possible.
- Get to know your school counselor. It’s a lot easier for them to guide you if they know you.
- Attain a respectable GPA. You should not expect your participation in college prep classes to substitute for mediocre grades.
- Consider researching careers you might be interested in at:

MyCollegeQuickStart <a href="https://quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp">https://quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp</a>	Temperament Sorter - <a href="http://www.advisorteam.com">www.advisorteam.com</a>
Big Future - <a href="https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?navid=gh-cp">https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?navid=gh-cp</a>	My Road <a href="http://www.myroad.com">www.myroad.com</a>
STEM type job quiz - <a href="http://stemtype.stemjobs.com/#/">http://stemtype.stemjobs.com/#/</a>	Birkman Abilities Inventory - <a href="http://www.birkman.com">www.birkman.com</a>
Self-Directed Search <a href="http://www.self-directed-search.com/">http://www.self-directed-search.com/</a>	My Majors <a href="http://www.mymajors.com">www.mymajors.com</a>
The O*NET database includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, and interests associated with occupations - <a href="http://online.onetcenter.org/find/">http://online.onetcenter.org/find/</a>	
National Association of Colleges and Employers - <a href="http://www.nacweb.org/">http://www.nacweb.org/</a>	

## Junior Year

### SUMMER

- Start preparing to take the SAT and ACT
- Think about your senior resume. Do your extracurricular activities reflect your interests and convey to others a worthy level of commitment? If so, keep it up. If not, time to make adjustments.

### FALL

- Continue to take challenging college prep classes
- Register for and take the PSAT
- Reevaluate your Hooks (areas of special talent or concentration) and continue to frame your high school activities around them.
- Attend presentations by college admissions representatives
- Attend the SSC College Fair and
- Attend the NACAC National College Fair if it’s in town <http://www.nacacnet.org/college-fairs/pages/default.aspx>
- Attend the SHS College Night for Juniors
- Attend the SHS Financial Aid Night
- Take your SAT/ACT. Keep taking them if your scores don’t meet with your satisfaction. Be sure to include our high school code: 101-565 and the code numbers of the colleges to which you plan to apply. Aim for a minimum total score of 1290 SAT (Reading & Math) and 29 ACT. These scores are required for the Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholarship. Otherwise, aim for an 1170 SAT or 26 ACT for the Florida Medallion Scholarship. Take advantage of the four free score reports and send your results to four colleges where you’re certain to apply.
- Attain a respectable GPA. You should not expect your participation in college prep classes to substitute for mediocre grades. Junior year grades are extremely important in the college admission process, because they are a

measure of how well you do in advanced, upper-level courses. Grades also are used to determine scholarships and grants for which you may be eligible. Put in the extra effort and keep those grades up!

- If you require financial aid, start researching your options for grants, scholarships and work study. Visit <http://www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/steps/Articles/Pages/roadmap.aspx> to do your own research.

## SPRING

- Keep taking the SAT & ACT if your scores don't meet with your satisfaction. Take advantage of the four free score reports and send your results to four colleges that you're certain to apply.
- Take SAT Subject Tests if required or recommended by your desired college(s). These are subject specific exams often required by selective colleges and universities. It's a good idea to take them in May and/or June when you're prepped for IB and AP exams.
- When selecting your senior courses, be sure to continue to challenge yourself academically.
- If you are interested in playing collegiate sports, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. This process clears you for recruiting. Athletes may want to check out a book entitled *Everything You Need to Know About College Sports Recruiting – A Guide for Parents and Players*, written by Jim Walsh.
- Collect writing samples, audition tapes, portfolios, and other material you may need for the fall application season.
- Line up your summer activities. What activities will further bolster your Hooks? Consider a career-related job, summer programs, dual enrollment courses, or community service.
- Conduct major and college search if necessary

MyCollegeQuickStart <a href="https://quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp">https://quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp</a>	College Navigator <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/">http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/</a>
College Toolkit <a href="http://www.collegetoolkit.com/Career/Main.aspx">http://www.collegetoolkit.com/Career/Main.aspx</a>	College Admissions Help <a href="http://HowToGetIn.com">HowToGetIn.com</a>
Big Future <a href="https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?navid=gh-cp">https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?navid=gh-cp</a>	My Majors <a href="http://www.mymajors.com">www.mymajors.com</a>

- Conduct career interest inventories. (see resources listed on page one under Freshman and Sophomore)
- Make a preliminary list of colleges you would like to investigate further. Surf the Internet and use the college resources in the guidance office or media center. Write, telephone, or use the Internet to request admission literature and financial aid information from the colleges on your list. There is no charge and no obligation to obtain general information.
- Ask your parents for your Social Security number. If you were never issued one, contact the closest Social Security office as soon as possible to obtain your number.
- Meet with your counselor to discuss your preliminary list of colleges. Discuss whether your initial list of colleges meets your needs and interests (academic program, size, location, cost, etc) and whether you are considering colleges where you are likely to be admitted. You should be both optimistic and realistic when applying to colleges.

## Senior Year

### SUMMER

- Develop a list of schools that you will apply to:
  - Reach schools: those you dream of attending but don't think you'll get in or have the money
  - Match schools: those you dream of attending and have a good shot at attending and affording
  - Safety schools: those you are virtually guaranteed admission and will have no problem affording.
- Complete the College Application Worksheet to determine the application requirements for each of your colleges.
- Visit as many colleges as possible
- Talk to your parents and together learn what you should be doing now to finance your education. Start learning about college costs and financial aid. A great resource is the College Scorecard found at <http://collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard/>.
- Use the financial calculator at [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov) to estimate how much your family will be expected to pay towards your college expenses or use the net price calculators at each university's website.
- IB students: write your extended essay. Your rough draft is due the day your return to school in August. Procrastinating will only make your fall semester more stressful and less enjoyable. Something won't get done, and it's usually your college applications and scholarships.

- Register with a free online scholarship search engine:  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)                      [www.wiredscholar.com](http://www.wiredscholar.com)                      [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)                      [www.scholaraid.com](http://www.scholaraid.com)  
[www.kaarme.com](http://www.kaarme.com)                      [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)                      [www.brokescholar.com](http://www.brokescholar.com)
- Set aside money for college from part-time jobs, gifts, or any other source. Saving any amount can make a big difference in what you can afford to pay for college.

## **AUGUST**

- Reevaluate your hooks and continue to frame your high school activities around them.
- Attend presentations by college admissions representatives. Scheduled visits are posted at the Seminole High School webpage, go to Guidance on the menu bar and select “College and Career” from the drop down menu.
- Do you need your counselor to write a letter of recommendation or complete a Secondary School Report? Do you need your teacher(s) to write letters of recommendation? Find out what you need and make your requests early.
- Call, or visit the website of the college Financial Aid office to determine if there are any school-based scholarships that require an additional application. Be sure to get the scholarship application deadline!
- Look at the Seminole High School, Guidance, Scholarships web page and search for scholarships. Do this every two weeks.
- Work on college essays and ask someone to critique them. Make them interesting. Is your Hook mentioned in the essay?
- If you haven’t taken the SAT or ACT with Writing, or if you’re not pleased with previous scores, sign up immediately. Delaying this test can delay a college’s decision about your admissibility. Remember that most colleges will mix and match your highest SAT section scores from multiple test dates, giving you the highest possible combined score. Most colleges will not mix and match ACT section scores from multiple test dates. Register to take the SAT Subject Tests if you need to and have not done so yet.

## **SEPTEMBER**

- Review your college plans with your counselor, identifying the schools to which you will apply. Are you applying to schools appropriate to your abilities, achievements, and goals?
- Complete college applications and submit them to the colleges with appropriate application fees.
- Submit transcript request forms. If necessary, submit the college’s “Secondary School Report” (or “Counselor’s Report”) which you receive as part of the application package, or which you download if you apply online, to your school counselor. Be sure to submit a clearly completed form with your senior resume, senior questionnaire, parent brag sheet, and transcript request form.
- Give recommendation forms or requests to teachers at least one month before the due date. Be sure they’re willing to write one for you. Provide them with the name and address of the school(s). Last minute requests generate ill-will. Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on their part. Some schools may request that sealed letters of recommendation be included with your application. If so, let the teacher know.
- Seriously begin seeking out sources of financial aid.

## **OCTOBER**

- Get inoculated...don’t catch senioritis!
- Attend the Seminole State College College Fair
- Make final college visits and schedule interviews.
- What consideration have you given to back-up schools?
- If you have not done so already, send SAT and ACT official score reports to your colleges.
- Refer to your College Application Worksheet or College Admission and Financial Aid Log and be sure that you’ve completed each step in the admissions process.
- If your college requires you to complete the CSS Profile as part of the financial aid process, it is available online at <http://profileonline.collegeboard.com> as of October 1.
- Visit the SHS/Guidance/Scholarships page and look for scholarships.

## **NOVEMBER**

- Don’t get senioritis!

- Finish all college applications. Procrastinating only increases stress. Delaying your application can jeopardize your chances for admission, financial aid and/or housing.
- Verify that your colleges have received everything you sent them before the due date
- Respond immediately to requests for additional info from college(s)
- Verify that letters of recommendation and transcripts have been sent.
- Request your first college application letter of recommendation by the November deadline.
- Visit the SHS/Guidance/Scholarships page and look for scholarships.

## DECEMBER

- Remind parents to gather financial info in preparation for completing financial aid forms after January 1
- Complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org). This is the application for Bright Futures and all other state funded financial aid programs.

## JANUARY

- If your colleges require mid-year reports, request transcripts and notify your counselor.
- Apply for housing at schools you are considering
- Collect your family's W-2 forms and begin completion of federal tax returns used for financial aid applications
- Complete the FAFSA online (use [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) – be sure not to use [www.fafsa.com](http://www.fafsa.com)). The FAFSA is the free federal financial aid application, or any financial aid forms required by your college(s).
- Keep watching for sources of scholarships and be sure to apply!

## FEBRUARY

- Check to see if any of your schools of choice have financial aid or housing application deadlines this month. You ALWAYS want to meet the Priority Financial Aid deadline designated by your college.
- Keep watching for sources of scholarships and be sure to apply!

## MARCH

- Respond immediately to requests from college(s) admission or financial aid offices
- Keep preparing for IB and AP tests, college credit earned in high school is like getting a scholarship
- Keep watching for sources of scholarships and be sure to apply!

## APRIL

- After receiving notifications of acceptance, make your final college decision.
- Notify your school of choice. Inform other schools to which you applied that you do not plan to attend (freeing up a space for someone on the waiting list)
- Financial aid award notices should have arrived by the end of the month. Make final plans for college housing, financial aid, and scholarships
- Seminole High School Honor Graduate Ceremony
- Keep watching for sources of scholarships and be sure to apply!

## MAY

- May 1 is nationally known as the college commitment day. All decisions must be made by this time.
- Notify schools of your decision if you will not be attending. Make room for someone else.
- Take IB and AP Exams
- Seminole High School Senior Awards Night
- Take time to write thank-you notes to those who helped you get to this point.
- Keep watching for sources of scholarships and be sure to apply!
- Graduation!

## JUNE

- Keep watching for sources of scholarships and be sure to apply!
- Each student will receive two official/sealed transcripts. You will need to pick them up from the Guidance Office and mail them to the appropriate school. After that, all transcripts are \$1.00 each.