



College-Bound Workbook

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Some information prepared by: The Post Graduate Center Cherry Creek High School, Durango High School & Glenwood Springs High School

College Bound Course Recommendations

<u>English</u>	<u>40 Credits</u>
Not included: Journalism, Drama	
<u>Social Studies</u>	<u>30 Credits</u>
American History	
World Cultures/ Geography	
Fundamentals of American Democracy	
<u>Math</u>	<u>40 Credits</u>
<u>Science</u>	<u>30 Credits</u>
Physical & Biological	
<u>Foreign Language</u> ...	<u>20 Credits</u>
<u>Physical Education</u> ..	<u>10 Credits</u>
<u>Health</u>	<u>10 Credits</u>
<u>Career Skills</u>	<u>10 Credits</u>
Business & Technology classes	
<u>Fine Arts</u>	<u>10 Credits</u>
Art, Music, Drama	

TOTAL CREDITS: 280



RFSD Pre-Collegiate Program

Year By Year College Bound Guide

Freshman Year

- Begin your high school career by knowing the credit requirements, and learning what is expected of college-bound students. Create a Four Year Plan with your school counselor, mentor and parents.
- Take the most rigorous academic schedule possible. Remember your semester grades count towards your cumulative GPA.
- Attend meetings with your mentor.
- Attend College Fairs and become familiar with the application process.
- Get involved! An important part of your college application will be how you spend your time outside of the classroom.
- Attend CMC Summer Program.
- Read! Volunteer!

Sophomore Year

- Continue to take the most rigorous academic schedule possible.
- Attend all PLAN test prep sessions.
- Take the PLAN test in October. It is an excellent evaluative tool for college-bound sophomores which give predictor scores for the ACT.
- Review test results to determine how you might improve. This is excellent preparation for the ACT.
- Attend College Fairs. Explore career options & areas of interest.
- Attend evening sessions & Saturday Academies with your parents to learn about college application process & financial aid options.
- Explore summer opportunities: internships; work experiences; volunteer opportunities; travel etc.
- Attend CU/Boulder Summer Program.
- Read!

Junior Year

★ September/October

- Continue taking the most rigorous academic schedule possible, thinking ahead to your senior year. Take dual-credit courses, if appropriate (CMC, CU/Succeed).
- Attend mentor meetings! Communicate with your mentor!
- Start a 'college notebook' & keep it organized: college info; test dates.
- Talk to your school counselor about graduation requirements.
- Get in the habit of looking at the counseling office postings for scholarship opportunities.
- Make sure you understand the standardized tests you will need to take & when they are offered. Keep a calendar w/ test registration deadlines etc.
- Attend College Fairs: get on mailing lists, visit with college representatives both at fairs and at school.
- Attend school information nights: college reps; financial aid; scholarships.
- Check CollegeInColorado.org on regular basis: scholarships & resources.
- Attend PSAT prep sessions, if recommended.
- Take PSAT. Recommended for anyone interested in applying to out- of- state colleges. It is also for anyone to be considered for the National Merit Scholarship.

- Adjust your second semester course schedule in November, if necessary.
- Plan college visits throughout the year.
- Perform community service. Stay involved!

★ January

- Attend all ACT prep classes. Schedule to be announced.
- Receive results of PSAT. Read materials sent w/ scores & determine how to improve. This is excellent preparation for SAT.
- First semester grades are important!
- Keep college notebook organized & updated!
- Inquire w/ school counselor about National Honor Society application.

★ February

- Review your transcripts and credits.
- Consider what colleges would be a solid match, given your academic record, interests, and finances. Think about a few that would be easy admission, a good fit and a stretch. Begin to develop your list.
- Understand what entrance exams are required for which colleges.
- Pre-register for senior classes: dual-credit classes; extra math; AP classes.
- Attend all ACT prep classes that are offered.

★ March

- Attend Saturday Academy session on college financial planning. Ask your parents to attend these meetings with you.
- Pre-register for FAFSA. Will need Social Security number. www.fafsa.ed.gov

★ April

- Take ACT (offered free in your high school).
- Take AP tests if enrolled in AP classes.
- Register for SAT, if considering out-of-state colleges.
- Continue to build a list of 5-10 colleges that match your interest: location, academics, size and financial needs. Review application deadlines & procedures.
- Plan for possible summer college visits.
- Register online for NCAA Clearinghouse if you plan to participate in a Division I or II sport in college. www.ncaa.org

★ May

- Take AP tests, if enrolled in AP classes.
- 2nd semester grades are very important!
- Register for SAT, if recommended (www.collegeboard.com/mysat)
- Register for June ACT (www.actstudent.org)
- Study your ACT results prior to re-taking test.
- Attend test prep classes when offered.
- Think about & plan your summer.
- Contact teachers for possible letters of recommendation.

★ June ~ August

- Attend CU/Boulder Summer Camp (mandatory): college essays, resume; practice applications; scholarship opportunities.
- Visit additional college campuses.

- Retake ACT and SAT, if recommended.
- Continue work on college essays & resume.
- Check “collegeincolorado.org” as resource: test prep; resumes; scholarships.
- Write letter to 2-3 teachers requesting letters of recommendation. Attach resume.
- Organize college notebook: colleges of interest; deadlines etc.
- Create an appropriate e-mail address.
- Work, travel, volunteer, READ!

Senior Year

★ September

- Take most rigorous academic schedule possible: dual-credit courses; AP classes.
- Meet with counselor to verify graduation credits & college entrance requirements.
- Attend mentor meetings! Communicate with your mentor!
- Consider retaking ACT. Study! Study! Review past test information. www.actstudent.org
- Attend all test prep sessions that are offered.
- Keep your college notebook organized w/ colleges of interest & application deadlines.
- Create scholarship file: check counseling office postings; online; pre-collegiate resource files. Watch deadlines.
- Follow-up with 2-3 teachers writing letters of recommendation. Give them deadlines, plus copy of your resume.
- Visit college fairs & meet with college reps.
- Note early decision & early action deadlines. Usually in November.
- Register for the Common Application. www.commonapp.org
- Register for College Opportunity Fund. www.cof.college-access.net
- Think about extracurricular activities & community service. Update your resume.

★ October

- Continue to follow up with letters of recommendation.
- Meet with college representatives who visit high school.
- Check application dates for colleges of interest.
- Keep college notebook updated: test calendar; scholarship deadlines. Stay organized! This is important!
- Keep safe record of all passwords, PIN #'s & ID #'s.
- Make sure all content on your Facebook page is appropriate. Remember college admissions offices may take a look.
- Attend Saturday Academies to work on college applications & scholarships.
- Finish essays. Get them read & edited by several people.
- Complete Early Decision applications.
- Check counseling office scholarship postings.

★ November

- Complete college applications by Thanksgiving break. Make copies of all applications before mailing.
- Ask counseling office to send transcripts.
- Send official test scores: act.org & collegeboard.com
- Confirm letters of recommendation have been sent.
- Request PCP letter for application fee waiver.

- Keep all records, test score reports, copies of applications, letters of reference. Do not throw anything away. Keep copies until at least end of first year at college.
- Adjust 2nd semester schedule, if need be.

★ December

- Complete remaining college applications, no later than winter break!
- Be concerned about first semester grades.
- Re-take ACT, if recommended.
- Keep looking for scholarships. Keep your file updated w/ deadlines etc.
- Attend Saturday Academies: financial aid & scholarships.
- Check application status on line. Follow up w/ admissions offices by phone, if necessary.

★ January ~ February

- Register w/ FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov). Attend Saturday Academy & high school information sessions w/ your parents. The application should be completed as soon after January 1st as possible. Get your parents involved! Mentors will have a FAFSA List of documents needed.
- Some colleges require submission of the CSS/Profile (www.collegeboard.com)
- Update scholarship notebook w/ applications & deadlines. Keep checking resources for application opportunities. Apply! Apply!
- Submit additional credentials to colleges (mid-year grades, test scores etc).
- Monitor college applications to be sure all materials have been received.
- Check with financial aid office at chosen schools. See what they require. When is their FAFSA deadline? What else do they need from you? What other financial aid & scholarship options do they offer?

★ March ~ April

- Complete scholarships by due date.
- Most colleges must receive FAFSA by March 1st.
- You should get acceptance letters & financial aid offers by mid-April.
- Make final campus visits, if needed.
- Keep grades up!

★ May

- Notify colleges of final decision by May 1st.
- Send tuition/housing deposits to college of choice.
- Notify other colleges that not attending.
- Take AP exams if enrolled in AP classes.
- Request final transcript to be sent to college attending.
- Write thank you notes to scholarship organizations teachers & mentors!
- GRADUATE!

GETTING STARTED: Know Thyself

Just when you've started to get comfortable in high school, when you're finally an Upperclassman, you have to make one of your biggest decisions yet: You have to choose that one school out of over 3,800 colleges and universities in the country as **THE SCHOOL FOR YOU**. So the first person you should probably have a sit-down, heart-to-heart conversation with is not your parent, your school counselor, or your best friend...it's you. You don't have to know what you're going to major in, or what you want to be when you grow up to start the college process, but you should have a general idea about who you are as an individual. Without a sense of yourself and your needs, how can you possibly pick a college that's right for you? Activity #1: Time For Some Soul-Searching There are obviously no right or wrong answers to the following questions, but your answers may give you some surprising insight into that age-old question: Who am I?

1. **GOALS:** Think about where you are now, and where you want to be in the future.
 - What kind of person are you at this point in your life?
 - What kind of person would you like to become?
2. **EDUCATION:** This is the whole reason you're going to college, right?
 - What is your learning style?
 - What courses do you enjoy most and least in high school?
 - What do you choose to learn on your own?
 - Would you prefer to learn by listening? Or learn by discussing?
 - What books have had an impact on you?
3. **ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS:** Fortunately, college is not just academics.
 - If you went home tonight and your homework was miraculously done for the rest of the week, how would you spend your free time?
 - What activities have you wanted to try but haven't yet?
4. **THE WORLD AROUND YOU:** Your environment says a great deal about you as a person.
 - How are you most like and unlike each of your parents?
 - When and where do you feel your best?
 - What current local/national/global issues are important to you?
5. **YOUR PERSONALITY:** Think about how you view yourself, and how you think others view you.
 - Are you influenced by others? Or do you influence others?
 - What do you expect from yourself? How often do you meet these expectations?

Now analyze your answers. Are you:

- Introverted or extroverted?
- A doer or a thinker?
- logical or impulsive?
- independent or group-oriented?
- patient or impatient?

· ready for college? Or scared to death?

As you begin to define who you are as a student and a person, you will hopefully start to recognize certain colleges as fitting your personality. And you may find that many schools could be a possible fit.

What are Colleges Looking For?

Each year, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) surveys colleges and universities to determine the top factors influencing admission decisions. According to the 2008 Admission Trends Survey, the following factors, in order of importance, were:

1. Grades in College Prep Courses
2. Admission Test Scores
3. Grades in All Subjects
4. Class Rank
5. Essay/Writing Sample
6. Counselor Recommendation
7. Teacher Recommendation
8. Interview
9. Community Service
10. Work/Extracurricular Activities

With these factors in mind, here are ways you can prepare yourself for the college application process.

Academics:

- ❖ Choose a rigorous course load. This means you should seek out courses that challenge you. Colleges would rather see you get a lower grade in a more challenging course than go for the easy 'A'. But remember the best scenario is good grades in challenging classes!
- ❖ Make sure your courses are appropriate and in logical progression. Meet with your counselor to ensure you are on the right track.
- ❖ Get to know your counselor and teachers on a more individual basis. These are the people who will be writing your recommendations!
- ❖ Keep your best work. Colleges may offer you a chance to submit supplementary material that demonstrates your achievements.
- ❖ Establish good study habits. Grades in the academic core areas (English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language) are the best predictors of success in college.
- ❖ Read! Studies have shown that one of the best preparations for the college admission tests (SAT and ACT) is to read as much as possible.

Extracurricular:

- ❖ Find activities, both in and out of school that you enjoy and provide an outlet for your non-academic side.
- ❖ Avoid being a "joiner." Colleges admire students who put time into one or two activities rather than students who put little time into many activities.

Personal:

- ❖ Start early
- ❖ Be yourself.
- ❖ Ask the tough questions: Who am I? What do I want to do and be? Where do I want to be? How am I going to get there?

Activity: What Are You Looking for in a College?

Put a check in the appropriate box rating each of the following personal criteria

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Will Not Accept
1. REGION (Consider Climate)				
East Coast				
West Coast				
Colorado				
Midwestern				
Other				
2. SIZE				
Small (Under 3,000)				
Medium (3,000-10,000)				
Large (10,000-20,000)				
Largest (Over 20,000)				
3. SETTING (What do you want to have access to?)				
Rural or Small town				
Near a moderate/ large city				
Near or in a major city				
4. DISTANCE FROM HOME (How often and easily do you want to come home?)				
Fewer than 2 hours				
2-6 hours				
More than 6 hours				
5. TYPE OF INSTITUTION				
Public				
Private				
Specialized (Art/Design/Technical)				
6. SCHOOL CALENDAR				
Semester				
Block Plan				
7. ACADEMICS				
Academic Facilities				
Average Class Size				
Faculty/ Student Ratio				
How many freshman return for sophomore year?				
Graduate Rate				
8. PROGRAMS OF STUDY				
Business				
Communications				
Liberal Arts				
	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Will Not Accept
Teacher Education				

Engineering				
Fine/Applied Arts				
Health Professions				
Other:				
Honors Program				
Study Abroad				
9. HOUSING				
Coed Residence Hall				
Required On-campus Housing				
Off-campus Housing				
10. COST PER YEAR				
Up to \$10,000				
\$10,000-\$20,000				
\$20,000-\$30,000				
More than \$30,000				
11. DIVERSITY				
Economic				
Racial				
Religious				
Gender				
12. SOCIAL LIFE, ACTIVITIES, AND PROGRAMS				
Active Fraternities and Sororities				
Banda				
Choirs				
Clubs, Organizations and Groups				
Community Involvement				
13. ATHLETICS				
Division I				
Division II				
Division III				
Intramural Teams				
Club Teams				
14. CAMPUS SAFETY				

In order of importance, choose your **top three** criteria for a potential college from the list above.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Of your most important criteria, what would you **like to have** but could live without?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Are there things the college must **NOT have**?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Do you have any questions about schools that you have been unable to answer? Meet with your counselor for help in finding the answers.

Activity: Completing an Online College Search

Now that you have compiled a set of criteria to help you in creating your college list, it's time to utilize the Internet as a resource. At the end of this Planning Guide is a complete list of the many different web sites we utilize in the Counseling Center, and we encourage you to try several different sites as you research Colleges.

At www.collegeboard.com, the College search link can help you match your interests and abilities to appropriate schools. You can save up to five searches, add colleges to a personal watch list, and update your preferences at any time. We recommend that you register with www.collegeboard.com so that you can save your searches and other information under your user name.

Open www.collegeboard.com

Click on “College Search” to start the process of picking a college

Complete the “College MatchMaker” which will help match schools with your preferences.

We recommend that you print out the first few pages of results to get an idea what schools match your criteria.

At this same website, you can also: Click on “Search by college name” to look up information on a specific college.

Type in the name of the school to find out specific facts about that school and find out where you can receive more information.

Check out the “More to Explore” section to view other schools that might be similar.

Activity: Your Preliminary College List

Now that you have completed an online college search, examine the top 15 schools, which most match your interests. List them below:

1. _____ State _____ Website _____

2. _____ State _____ Website _____

3. _____ State _____ Website _____

4. _____ State _____ Website _____

5. _____ State _____ Website _____
6. _____ State _____ Website _____
7. _____ State _____ Website _____
8. _____ State _____ Website _____
9. _____ State _____ Website _____
10. _____ State _____ Website _____
11. _____ State _____ Website _____
12. _____ State _____ Website _____
13. _____ State _____ Website _____
14. _____ State _____ Website _____
15. _____ State _____ Website _____

Where do I go from Here? Research, Research, Research

The next step in examining schools on your list involves research. This is the time to gather information about individual schools and see how they will meet your needs.

Online Research

The Internet is a powerful tool in your college search and application process, and often one of the best places to start. The 2005 Admission Trends Survey conducted by the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) shows that 100% of the respondents (colleges) have a website, and 91% provide an online application.

We encourage you to do your own web research, and visit the websites of the individual colleges you are considering. Some of the things you can do on a colleges' website include:

- take a virtual campus tour
- read the student newspaper to discover what is happening on campus
- e-mail professors in departments in which you are interested
- ask questions of admission staff
- ask for applications and viewbooks to be mailed to your home

Many of the online college search sites have links to the colleges' websites. Most colleges list their admission requirements, test requirements, degrees and majors offered, housing information, cost and financial aid information, etc. Most schools also provide statistics about the average or middle 50% SAT and/or ACT scores of the freshman class, and average or middle 50% high school grade point averages. This information is very important because it helps you rate your chances of admission.

Objective Guidebooks

In addition to college websites, similar information can be found in a number of different resources available in the Counseling Office. Some good reference books are:

- *The College Board's College Handbook*
- *Peterson's Guide to Colleges* These resources provide objective and statistical information.

Subjective Guidebooks

Other resources provide opinions about colleges. You may want to check out:

- *US News and World Report Best Colleges*
- *331 Best Colleges*
- *The Gourman Report*
- *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*
- *The Insider's Guide to the Colleges*
- *The Fiske Guide to Getting into the Right College*

Some of these books offer student perspectives and opinions, others rank different programs and fields of study at schools. It is important for you as the consumer to look beyond the rankings and ask how they arrive at them.

People as Resources

- Your counselor is an excellent resource for learning about schools. Our counselors have helped many students through the process, and often hear back from former GSHS students who are in college. They can tell you how you might like a place and fit in with the kinds of students who attend those schools. Counselors at GSHS are often invited to visit college campuses and are happy to share information and their impressions with students.
- Recent graduates of GSHS are another good resource.
- Current seniors who are going through the college admission process and visiting colleges are also a great resource as you try to gather your own information about schools of interest.
- Teachers, parents and college alumni are additional resources to investigate. Remember that everyone will have an opinion. The most useful opinions to you will be from people who know you well and know what you might like in a school.

Choosing Your "Foundation" School: Your Most Important Task

Many students are tempted to start their college list with their "dream school", the school they would love to attend, but that might be a long shot in terms of admission. We often hear students say, "Well, I'm applying to State U, but I don't really want to go there."

We recommend a different approach: your first priority should be finding one or two schools that you are sure you can get into -your foundation schools- and that you would be very happy to attend. For some students, this is the hardest school to find: for others, it's the easiest. But starting your college list with your "foundation" school allows you to approach the college

selection process with “insurance”: the knowledge that you have at least one school where you would be happy.

To find your “foundation” school, look for schools that meet your basic criteria, and where you easily fit the academic profile of students who attend that school. It should also be a school that will challenge you academically with majors that interest you. Remember, selectivity does not equal quality: in other words, just because it may be easier to get into a certain college does not mean that the education you’ll receive there won’t be strong. Again, there are over 3,800 colleges and universities in this country. Regardless of how selective they are, most can offer a valuable education to their students.

Average ACT	% Admitted	Popular Majors	Total Cost Tuition + Housing
25-30	69%	Business, Biology, Education, Social Science	\$15, 830
21-26	76%	Education	\$33,412
31-34	7%	Social Sciences, Biology	\$51,816
21-27	64%	Business, Engineering, Health	\$28,159
27-31	38%	Performing Arts, Business, Social Science	\$53,943
20-25	73%	Business, Education	\$19,808
24-30	48%	Social Sciences, Business	\$50,267
21-25	67%	Business, Social Sciences	\$18,458
N/A	80%	Social Sciences, Business	\$37,825
21-27	96%	Business, Education	\$16,576
N/A	N/A	Automotive 2 yr program	\$16,015

Average ACT	CO Index Score	% Admitted	Popular Majors	Total Cost Tuition + Housing
19.5	80		Biology, Business	\$11,474
28	110	63%	Engineering, Math	\$20,364
24.1	101	72%	Business, Biology, Social Science	\$18,054
20	86	95%	Social Science, Business, Health	\$15,581
22.3	92	68%	Business, Social Science, Liberal Arts	\$16,295
20	85	81%	Health, Liberal Arts	\$14,572
20	76	64%	Business, English, Psychology	\$5,174- No Housing/food
24-28	103	84%	Social Science, Business, Biology	\$24,757
21-26	92	62%	Business, Social	\$15,266
22	94	92%	Business, Health, Journalism	\$17,640
21	80	72%	Education, Science	\$14,564
27	N/A	70%	Business	\$48,254
N/A	N/A	100%	Business, Computer	\$2,136

School	Location	Size Undergrad.	Public/Private	% In state - % Out State
Brigham Young University	Provo, Utah	30,745	Private	34/66
Carroll College	Helena, Montana	1,409	Private	53/47
Harvard College	Cambridge, Massachusetts	6,655	Private	15/85
Montana State University	Bozeman, Montana	10,840	Public	62/38
New York University	New York, New York	21,638	Private	28/72
Northern Arizona University	Flagstaff, Arizona	18,301	Public	68/32
University of California- Santa Barbara	Manoa, Hawaii	19,796	Public	96/4
University of Hawaii- Manoa	Santa Barbara, California	13,952	Public	72/28
University of Oregon	Eugene, Oregon	18,509	Public	61/39
University of Wyoming	Laramie, Wyoming	9,748	Public	53/47
Universal Technical Institute	Avondale, Arizona	1,637	Private	N/A

School	Location	Size Undergrad.	Public/Private	% In state - % Out State
Adams State	Alamosa	2,369	Public	90/10
CO School of Mines	Golden	3,675	Public	71/29
Colo State University	Ft. Collins	22,158	Public	79/21
Colo State University-Pueblo	Pueblo	5,579	Public	92/8
Fort Lewis College	Durango	3,685	Public	64/36
Mesa State College	G. Junction	6,939	Public	87/13
Metro State College	Denver	21,729	Public	96/4
University of Colo- Boulder	Boulder	27,069	Public	59/41
University of Northern Colo	Colo Springs	7,002	Public	86/14
Western State College	Greeley	10,109	Public	90/10
University of Denver	Gunnison	2,193	Private	65/35
Colorado Mountain College	Denver	5,343	Private	47/53
	Western CO	1,658	Public	--

Up Close and Personal: The Campus Visit

There is no substitute for seeing a college campus first-hand. Sure, viewbooks and websites can give you a lot of information and glossy photos, but meeting professors and students, seeing classrooms and residence halls, and eating the food – that’s what gives you a true feeling of a college.

WHEN TO GO

A campus visit is informative any time, but it’s best to see the school while it’s in session and students are in classes. If you can only visit during the summer, on a weekend, or when the school is on a break, that’s okay-just be prepared to visualize what the school looks like with students and professors in the class-rooms and residence halls.

BEFORE YOU GO

Plan ahead! We recommend giving an admission office at least two weeks advance notice of your visit. Also, read up on the college and think about possible questions you’d like to ask.

- You may want to do any of the following while you’re visiting a college:
- Tour the campus, including residence halls
- Schedule an interview with an admission officer, if it is offered, or attend an information session
- Sit in on a class
- Meet with a professor in your interest area
- Meet with a coach if you’re interested in participating in a sport
- Eat lunch or dinner in one of the cafeterias
- Spend the night in one of the residence halls with a current student host

- Attend a special event, like a lecture, play, or concert, if available
- Talk informally with current students to get their impressions

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

- Talk to as many students as you can and don't be bashful about asking questions.
- Prepare for your interview and take along your list of questions.
- Be on time!
- Take time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere.
- Pick up a student newspaper to find out what the issues are on campus.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

- When you talk with your tour guide or other students, ask:
- What other colleges did you apply to?
- Why did you decide to attend this college?
- How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical here?
- Approximately how many students were in your freshman classes?
- Approximately how many students are in your current classes?
- Do many students go home on weekends?
- Are faculty members accessible outside of class?
- Is there easy access to computers? Where are they located?
- How easy is it to get the classes you want?
- What three things would you change about this college?
- What three things would you not change about this college?
- Where do students go to socialize?
- What is the surrounding town or city like?

In an interview or information session, you could ask:

- Does the college have academic programs that fit my interests?
- Will I have access to special equipment (such as an electron microscope) as a first-year student?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
- How many students will there be in courses I'm likely to take my first year? Are those courses taught by professors or graduate students?
- Will there be any new programs or facilities in the next two years?
- What are the college's recent graduates doing now?

AFTER THE VISIT

- Whether you're visiting just one campus, or doing a marathon trip across the country, write down your impressions right after you see a college! Ask yourself:
- Were the people you met friendly?
- Did they answer your questions fully and candidly?
- Did the college offer programs in your areas of interest?
- What do you think of the quality of instruction and the academic atmosphere?
- Were the students the kind of people you'd like to get to know?
- Did you like the social atmosphere?
- Would you be happy with this college as your "home" for four years?

WHAT IF YOU CAN'T VISIT A CAMPUS?

Sometimes a campus visit just isn't feasible. Don't worry! There are ways to get a feel for a specific college's atmosphere without setting a foot on campus. Try these ideas:

- Visit the college's website. You'll be amazed at the depth of information available there. They may also have a 'virtual tour' of the campus.

- Read as much as you can about that school. Read the school's viewbook and catalog, and read reviews of the college in *The Fiske Guide* or *The Insider's Guide*.
- Ask questions of the admission officer at that college who works with applicants from GSHS, either when they visit GSHS, at a college fair, or by phone or e-mail.
- If a GSHS graduate attends a college you're interested in, you may be able to contact him or her.
- Ask the college if they have current students who are willing to speak with prospective students via phone or e-mail.

Learning Your Way Around the College Entrance Exams

While there seems to be a great deal of emphasis on college entrance exams, they are only one of the many factors colleges look at in making their final decisions. Some of these tests are used in the admission process as indications of academic potential; some are used for educational placement; others are designed as preliminary opportunities to develop good test-taking skills. Many students choose to retake some of these tests to enhance their scores. Be sure to find out which exams are required by the colleges you are considering. The following descriptions may be helpful in understanding more about college admission testing.

ACT: The ACT is more achievement-oriented than the SAT, measuring acquired skills and knowledge in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. It is currently administered free of charge to all juniors at Glenwood Springs High School in April, and is administered nationally on several other dates as well. Like the SAT, it is required of applicants by many colleges and sponsors of scholarship programs. Most colleges accept either the SAT or the ACT. We recommend that you take this test in the spring of your junior year and retake it, if necessary, in the summer or fall of your senior year.

SAT: The SAT measures verbal and quantitative (math) reasoning ability. It is administered periodically at test centers throughout the United States and is required by many colleges and sponsors of scholarship programs. We recommend that you take the SAT in the spring of your junior year and retake it, if necessary, in the fall of your senior year.

SAT II: The SAT II's are subject tests which measure your knowledge and skills in a particular subject and your ability to apply that knowledge. Subject tests fall into five general areas: English, history and social studies, mathematics, science, and foreign languages. Some colleges, such as the University of California system, require particular subject tests. We recommend that you check individual college requirements for SAT II's and plan appropriate times to take these tests. For example, if you are studying for an AP Biology test, it may be advantageous for you to take the SAT II in Biology around the same time.

Advanced Placement (AP): A college may permit a new student to skip or even receive credit for a class in which they pass the AP test. Many colleges grant advanced placement and/or credit for a score of 3 or better. These tests are graded from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): Some colleges require the TOEFL of

students whose first or native language is not English. This test, either alone or in combination with the ACT and/or SAT, will give colleges information needed to make admission decisions.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TESTING

Registration Forms are available in the Counseling Office. You can also register for the SAT online at www.collegeboard.com and the ACT online at www.act.org.

Test preparation information is available through two main resources: SAT, SAT II, and ACT guidebooks which give sample tests and test prep software for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT for use on a personal computer.

Test scores are returned approximately four weeks after a test date. You will receive your SAT, SAT II, and ACT scores in the mail. Also, students can access their SAT scores online about two weeks after taking the tests.

Many colleges require a report of your scores directly from the testing agency. You may send your scores for free to four schools when you register for the SAT and ACT. Additional score reports cost up to \$9.50 for each school.

If you are applying Early Decision or Early Action to any college, we recommend that you have your test scores directly reported to the college.

Most colleges will take your highest SAT Verbal and Math score, and your highest ACT Composite (average) score.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS: Understanding Your Options

College applications usually consist of a biographical/informational form to be completed by the student and parent, academic information (including coursework, grades and transcript), activities and other involvement, teacher and counselor recommendations, essays and personal statements, and an application fee.

Most colleges have their own applications, which are generally available by mail or from the colleges' website. Students may often print out the application and send it in by mail, or complete the application and apply online. Online applications are convenient and easy to complete, and some colleges are using them exclusively. If you apply online, be aware of other support documents and information, which you must send in separately. Often your application is incomplete and will not be considered until the admission office receives all your documents. This may include official test scores, high school transcripts, and letters of recommendation.

Over 300 colleges, mostly private, participate in the Common Application, which is a generic application a student completes one time and photocopies for the colleges that accept it. These applications are available through their website, www.commonapp.org, or are available in the Counseling Office. Be sure to check carefully for supplemental essays/materials required by the individual schools.

Deadlines

Application deadlines are critical in college admissions. Missing a deadline often means you have lost your chance to apply at all. Remember that the Counseling Office has its own deadlines you must meet as well, generally 2 weeks before your college's deadline. Since we must gather, complete and mail many supporting documents for each application, and many GSHS students are applying to schools at the same time, we insist on at least 2 weeks and sometimes 3 weeks in advance of your deadline. The Counseling Office is closed when school is not in session, so extra time must be factored in around holidays and breaks.

Early Decision, Early Action, and Regular Decision Applications

The use of multiple admission plans by colleges and universities often results in confusion and concern among students, parents, and high school counselors. In an effort to help reduce this confusion, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has developed the following definitions of admission decision options as of September 2001.

Early Decision is the application process in which students make a commitment to a first choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. Students must withdraw all other applications as soon as they have been admitted. Should a student who applies for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early decision commitment. Talk this option

over carefully with your parents and counselor if you are planning to consider an early decision application. Many early decision applications are due as early as November.

Early Action is the application process in which students make an application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institutions offer of admissions. Check the early action requirement of the schools you are applying to. Some schools allow you to apply to as many early action schools as you want. Others do not let you apply to any other early action schools if you apply to them.

Regular Decision is the application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15.

Rolling Admission is the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. Wait List is an admission decision option utilized by institutions to protect against shortfalls in enrollment. Wait lists are sometimes made necessary because of the uncertainty of the admission process, as students submit applications for admission to multiple institutions and may receive several offers of admission. By placing a student on the wait list, an institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends to a candidate the possibility of admission in the future before the institution's admission cycle is concluded.

Often applying as early as possible increases your chances of admission and eligibility for particular programs.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Early Application Programs

The advantage to colleges with early application options is that they often get a strong pool of early applicants who are either committing to attend or indicating a very strong interest in attending their school. In fact, some colleges are taking fairly large percentages of their freshman classes through their early programs. Students who apply under an early option sometimes have a better chance of admission as part of a smaller early applicant pool. Being accepted early can also alleviate the stress of the college application process much earlier in the school year.

Disadvantages to students include completing campus visits, research, and applications early in the school year, and being ready to commit to one school through Early Decision. Early decision is not for students who are unsure about how they will finance college (you will not be able to apply to other colleges and then compare financial aid packages), or who are still not sure that this one college is the best fit for him/her, or who had a weak junior year and may need a strong senior year to help their application.

Asking for Letter of Recommendation

How to Request a Recommendation for College or Career

Dec 1, 2008 Estela Kennen

A letter of recommendation can make or break an application for college or employment. Knowing who and how to ask for a letter goes a long way.

Requesting a letter of recommendation is a big deal- one that plenty of people have ruined by not considering the needs of the person they are hoping will write a recommendation. Fortunately, a little effort and a little etiquette are all that is needed to properly request a letter.

Choosing Who To Ask

- DO ask people who have known you for several years (or at least for more than one class), preferably under a variety of circumstances (student, employee, club/ church member, etc.)
- Do NOT ask people solely because they are well-known or powerful. For instance, a thoughtful recommendation from a teacher is better than a vague letter from a senator.
- Do NOT ask people whom you have let down.

Knowing How to Ask

As in person if possible. If not possible, send a short note explaining not only the request, but the context:

“Professor Smith,

As you might remember, after graduating, I moved to Far Away Land, where I have been working as a [position] at [Organization]. Well, I’ve recently decided to take the plunge and apply to graduate school! The program(s) I am looking at compliment both my undergraduate work and things I have learned and done since then. Your recommendation was vital in my getting my current position, and I was hoping you would be willing to do the favor once again. The deadline is a month away. Let me know what you think, and I’ll send you all the details.

Thank you for your continued support.”

After the person has agreed to write the letter of recommendation, provide him or her with supporting documentation (see below) and a short reminder/ thank you note.

Give the recommender plenty of time (at least a month if possible). If the person has not told you the recommendation has been sent, send a polite reminder a week before the deadline.

Providing Basic Information

Making the recommender’s life easier by providing all the necessary information. Ask if electronic or print materials are preferable. Include:

- The requester’s contact information
- The name, title & address of the person who will receive the letter.
- Any guidelines mentioned or specific documents provided by the college/internship/company

- A current resume or CV
- An example of pertinent work (like a research paper or art portfolio), if relevant
- A pre-addressed, stamped envelope for sending the letter
- A deadline for writing the recommendation.

Ghost-Writing A Letter

People will sometimes ask that the first draft of a letter of recommendation be written from them. This is perfectly acceptable- so long as the person sees, approves (and, usually, edits), and signs off on the letter. This letter should b written just as if the actual recommender was doing so.

Sending a Thank You Letter

Saying thank you for a letter of recommendation is important. First, it is the right thing to do. After all, the other person did not have to write a recommendation, but was doing a favor. Second, a person might need to ask someone for more than one letter, so it is a good idea to stay in that person's good graces. A thank you letter should be sent promptly, but it needs not be detailed. A couple of sentences should suffice:

“Dear NAME,

I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the letter(s) you recently wrote for me. You have been a wonderful teacher/ employer, and I am truly thankful for your support as I begin this next stage in my life.

Thank you once again,

Sincerely,

Name.”

The thank you can reflect a specific relationship- formal or humorous. Also remember that one of the best “thank you’s” anyone can give is letting the recommender know the outcome of the application.

In short, people should be polite, informative, and timely when asking for letters of recommendation, sending reminders, and giving thanks.

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http://college-preparation.suite101.com/article.cfm/asking_for_a_letter_of_recommendation
3/8/2010

Students and parents often find the essay to be one of the most frightening parts of the college application. In order to ease your mind, most colleges do not expect you to create an exhaustive novel in your college essay. They simply want to know you better and discover your unique qualities. Yes, you do have unique qualities!

- When writing a personal statement, a short and original essay is desirable.
- If a choice of topics is given, choose a topic, make a list of ideas to be covered in
- the essay, develop an outline, and write a first draft.
- Be certain the personal statement is broken into paragraphs. One long paragraph
- does not look good in a personal essay.
- Vary the structure and length of your sentences to provide interest.
- Use intelligent sentences and common sense.
- Use your own style, but write in a direct, conversational manner.
- Make certain you have a smooth transition from one idea or another and from one
- paragraph to another.

It is often helpful to attend college essay writing sessions. Take advantage of the opportunities your English class offers to work on essays, and ask your English teacher, counselor, and parents to help you. Finally, edit your work.

Your Reputation Precedes You: Recommendations and Evaluations Some colleges either require or encourage that your application includes two to three school-related recommendations. Two evaluations by academic teachers (often one closely related to your intended field of study), and an evaluation by your counselor will cover all of the necessary requirements. Occasionally you may want to also include a special recommendation from a coach, activity sponsor, or non-academic teacher who can provide an exceptional view of a particular area of interest or strength. If you are applying to public institutions in Colorado, and meet the admission index, recommendations are generally not necessary. Talk with your counselor if you are uncertain.

No evaluations will be written about you without your expressed request, and you will be given the option of waiving or not waiving your right to read the teacher evaluations. You may also need to have them sign an individual college's special form at a later date. In order to have a greater level of rapport and understanding, you should take some time to sit down with a teacher and your counselor before you ask them to do an evaluation/recommendation. They will appreciate the opportunity to update their knowledge of your interests, activities, and educational goals. In asking teachers to write recommendations, you should ask those for whom you have accomplished positive outcomes and who also know you on a more personal level.

Recommendations can give the college admissions office a more complete view of you in such areas as academic potential, personal character, leadership, motivation, self discipline, and interpersonal skills. If you don't feel comfortable asking a teacher for an evaluation, it may be best not to do so; but maybe now is the time to begin to develop a stronger bond with at least one of your teachers. You will be amazed at the overall benefits this type of relationship can bring.

Teachers and counselors who write many letters of recommendation appreciate all of the advance notice you can provide. Be sure to thank those people who are taking the time to write your letters for you.

FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION: Show Me The Money!

One of the major hurdles in the college application process is financial aid. With the cost of funding a college education high and getting higher, many families are understandably

concerned about how to finance that expense for their children. However, do not eliminate a college strictly on cost alone until you have applied for assistance and been told how much financial aid you will be receiving.

The futures room has extensive information about all forms of financial aid. The financial aid office of the college you are interested in can also provide you with valuable information, and you should contact them about your special needs and concerns.

Need-Based Financial Aid

Most students rely on federal programs for funding, and that aid is based on evidence of financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

So, how do you get started? In order to receive financial aid, you must apply each year you are in college. If you don't think you qualify, try anyway. You may have more options than you think. You will be ahead of the game if you collect your income tax information throughout the year so it can be compiled and ready right after January 1.

Step 1

Pick up a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from the Counseling Office. You can also complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov (this is your fastest alternative). The FAFSA will determine how much money you and your family must contribute each year for your education. Some schools require you to fill out their own application. Check with each school you are considering to find out what they require.

Step 2

Check out as many sources as you can find for scholarships. Your counselor and the futures office are excellent resources, as is the Internet. NOTE: These financial aid resources are free; do NOT pay for this information.

Step 3

Complete and submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 of the year you plan to attend school.

Step 4

Your FAFSA will be evaluated using a standard formula that takes into account you and your family's income, assets, and other special circumstances. This need analysis will determine the amount you and your family will be expected to contribute for your education, which is called your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). Your NEED is the difference between the cost of your education and your family's contribution.

Say your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) is \$5,000. At a college with a total cost of \$8,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$3,000 in financial aid. At a college with a total cost of \$25,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$20,000 in aid. In other words, you'd be contributing the same amount at both colleges.

STEP 5

You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) that lists all the information you provided on the application. Be sure all information is correct; send corrections back to the processor.

STEP 6

Your school's financial aid office will receive the results of the FAFSA analysis. If you qualify for aid you will receive an award package detailing the types and amounts of financial aid for which you are eligible.

STEP 7

When you receive your financial aid packages, consider your options carefully. When you have made your decision, reply to that school by their deadline. Don't hesitate to call your school's financial aid office if you have questions.

Need-based aid packages may include a combination of three types of financial aid:

Loans: These may be federal, state, or institutional, and interest rates are usually low. Repayment may not start until after graduation depending on whether it is a student loan or a parent loan.

Grants: These are usually gifts or aid in the form of tuition and/or fee reduction.

Work Study: The college will provide the student with a job on campus to earn money to help defray costs. These jobs usually pay better than minimum wage, have limitations on working hours, and require that the student apply and be accepted for a particular work-study placement.

The package may meet all or part of the need as computed by the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile. While most colleges will try to meet a high percentage of your need, the packages from different schools may vary. You will want to consider all your options carefully.

Most of the federal money that is available for higher education assistance is disseminated directly by the college.

Several pointers:

- If you are curious about your level of possible need, you can utilize a need estimator at www.finaid.org.
- Apply early. Most aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Keep a copy of every form you complete.
- If there is no way your taxes can be filed right after January 1, you are allowed to send an estimate as long as you can verify those figures, if asked, at a later date.
- Families who cannot qualify for financial aid based on the FAFSA can usually get loans.
- Putting savings in your student's name can affect need. If that is the case in your family; ask your college what happens after the money is spent.

Non-Need or Merit-Based Financial Aid

Scholarships, grants, and financial aid that are non-need based are divided into two major categories: Talent-based Scholarships and Private Scholarship Programs.

Talent - Based Scholarships

These scholarships are usually given by the college as an inducement or reward for demonstrated or proven talents. The most common ones are academic, athletic, and artistic/musical scholarships. You typically have to continue to participate in these areas during college or maintain a certain GPA to keep the scholarship.

Inquiries regarding talent scholarships may go through the respective departments at the college of your choice or the admission office itself. The college's financial aid office can be of help in contacting the appropriate individuals. You will want to receive written confirmation of scholarship awards prior to making a final choice of colleges.

Private Scholarship Programs

A large number of community, religious, professional and ethnic groups sponsor scholarship programs. Some may have special qualification requirements, restrictions on fields of study or particular institutions, and/or requirements that the student or parents be members of a certain group. You should check the eligibility requirements and stipulations carefully.

Most of these scholarships have their own forms and are available from the group offering the scholarship or, in some cases, from the Counseling Office. Deadlines vary a great deal and most are announced and have deadlines early in the calendar year.

The Boettcher Scholarship awards Colorado students who meet the following criteria with a fullride scholarship to any of Colorado's colleges or universities.

Students must:

- ✓ Be seriously interested in attending college in Colorado
- ✓ Rank in the top 5% of the senior class
- ✓ Have a strong community service and leadership record
- ✓ Score 1200 or higher on the SAT; 27 or higher on the ACT

Other Ways to Reduce Your College Cost

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC): ROTC is offered through all four military branches (Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy). Students who are interested in a career in the military after college will take required military science courses, in addition to their regular college courses, and will benefit from scholarships offered by ROTC. Information on all four military branch ROTC programs is available in the Counseling Office.

Colorado Commission on Higher Education
 Index for Public Colleges and Universities in
 Colorado for first time freshmen

College Name	Index Required
Adams State College*	80
Colorado School of Mines	110
Colorado State University	101
Fort Lewis College	92
Mesa State College*	85
Metropolitan State College	76

University of Colorado- Boulder	103
University of Colorado- Denver	93
University of Northern Colorado	94
Western State College	80

* Applies to students admitted to four-year programs only.

Useful Internet Sites

Glenwood Springs High School Web Site: www.gshs.rfsd.k12.co.us

Roaring Fork High School Web Site: <http://rfhs.rfsd.k12.co.us/>

Basalt High School Web Site: <http://bhs.rfsd.k12.co.us/>

College Searches

An excellent and complete resource listing and linking to all 2 and 4 year schools in Colorado- including financial and scholarship information.

www.CollegeInColorado.org

www.collegeboard.com

www.collegeincolorado.org

Princeton review is a college search tool with updated information: www.princetonreview.com

Peterson's college quest- find a college or compare colleges. Essay information:

www.petersons.com

Hobsons College Review- careers, college searches, and virtual tours: www.collegeview.com

Financial Aid and Scholarship Information

Free Application for Federal Student Aid- complete guidelines and information: www.fafsa.ed.gov

<https://cof.college-assist.org/COFApp/COFApp/Default.aspx>

www.fastweb.com

Free scholarship search when students set up a profile

www.collegeboard.com

www.collegeincolorado.org

Testing Information

www.act.org

ACT Testing registration and information.

www.collegeboard.com

SAT Testing registration and information.

Other Information

www.ncaa.org

NCAA general information and eligibility registration.

www.wiche.edu

Western Undergraduate Exchange Program – allows out of state students to enroll and receive in-state tuition.