

JUNIORS

Checklist for College Planning

This is the year to decide where you want to go to college. Attend college fairs, financial aid seminars and general information sessions to learn as much as you can about the college application process. Make sure you are meeting NCAA requirements if you want to play Division I or II sports in college.

September

- _____ Register for a SAT. The ACT will be given at GCA.
- _____ Make sure you are on track to complete your selected diploma plan.
- _____ Maintain your co-curricular record (all year).
- _____ Keep track of your volunteer hours in FACTS Family Portal. These hours will print on your transcript, which you will submit with college applications.
- _____ Attend the Christian college fair at Prestonwood. Ask God to direct you in your choice.
- _____ Make a list of colleges you would like to investigate further. Use the internet to find out more about each university.
- _____ If GCA schedules a college trip, go on it! It will help you to compare, no matter where it is.
- _____ Register online at each university's website for **several** college visits to be completed by May. Make as many of these as you can on (a) the university's college preview days and (b) the weekends. **Attending the full day college preview will give you the maximum amount of information in the minimum amount of time.** You will be able to narrow your college search much more quickly by attending a programmed preview day. **Register for these before space fills up.**

NOTE: The more visits you make, the more you will know where you want to spend four years living and studying. Visiting several college campuses helps you compare. Don't choose a university because your friends are going there. Choose a university because, after your own personal research, you believe it will best fit you as a growing Christian; a place that will give you the tools you need to live and work and serve God to the fullest throughout your life.



_____ Put your planned college visits on your calendar and complete the Planned Absence Request online for the days you'll need to miss school. Remember that more than 6 absences in a semester (for a class that meets three days a week) will mean you won't earn credit for that class.

_____ If you know for certain you want to apply to a particular school, make an appointment to **personally meet your admissions counselor**. The purpose of this meeting will be to tell him/her about yourself and find out about scholarship opportunities that you might not have seen on the website. This meeting is a little like a job interview, so go prepared by familiarizing yourself with the university website and prepare to tell about how you can contribute to the university and/or campus life. Ask about any questions you have that cannot be answered on the website.

October

_____ Junior year PSAT scores may qualify a student for the National Merit Scholarship Competition and the National Achievement and the National Hispanic Scholars Programs.

_____ Sign up for a minimum of three college visits to be completed by May.

_____ Keep notes on each college that you realistically would like to attend.



November

_____ 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. The transcript at the end of your junior year will be the one you use when applying to colleges. So put in the extra effort and keep those grades up.

_____ Research all that you can on financial aid (scholarships, grants, work-study programs, etc.) for the colleges that you are interested in.

December

_____ During December, you should receive the results of your PSAT. Read your score report. The PSAT is excellent preparation for the SAT and the ACT which you will take in the spring.

_____ From each university's website, make a note of the approximate cost of attending with your grades and standardized test scores. If you have not yet taken the SAT or ACT, make a note of the score you need to attain the level of financial award that you want.

January

- _____ Go to ACT.org and take the practice test
- _____ Schedule your test practice time on your personal calendar or planner. Use your planner or calendar every day until you develop a system that works for you. You will need this same system to stay organized, especially in college.

February

- _____ Attend any college trips offered by GCA.
- _____ Keep notes on all the colleges you are still interested in attending.
- _____ Narrow your search and plan overnight trips to your final two or three choices.
- _____ If you took the SAT and plan to take it again, go to Khan Academy and the College Board website to get personalized practice for your weaker areas.

March

- _____ This time next year you will receive your financial award letter from any colleges you have been accepted to. To



make sure you receive the maximum award, practice for the SAT and/or ACT to increase your score; make the best grades you can; and meet your college admissions counselor at the universities that you have chosen. Don't forget to check into work-study programs which can provide you with a part-time job (usually 10 hours a week or less) on the college campus.

- _____ Take the ACT at GCA in April. If you would like, plan when you will take it again to improve your score. The test is offered at other high school campuses.



April

- _____ This is your last month this school year to schedule an overnight visit to a college campus that is within your top two choices.
- _____ Look into summer jobs and/or take dual credit classes in the summer. Dual credit is a good way to save tuition dollars as well as show universities that you are capable of college level work.
- _____ Ask a teacher to write a recommendation letter for you

May-June

- _____ After school ends, get on the road to visit colleges. Seeing the college firsthand, taking a tour, and talking to students can be the greatest help in deciding whether or not a school is right for you.
- _____ Research scholarships online and by asking department heads at the college you are most interested in.
- _____ Take the SAT and/or the ACT.



July-August

- _____ Visit colleges, take tours, have interviews and ask questions. Make college visiting a family event. Involve your parents and siblings in every step of your application process. Choosing the right college is a tough decision; the opinions of those who know you best provide insight into which college is best for you.
- _____ Start the actual application process: draft application essays; collect writing samples; and assemble portfolios or audition tapes. Early application for some colleges is **August 1**. If you are an athlete, and plan on playing in college, sign up for beRecruited or CaptainU.
- _____ Complete the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse form if you hope to play Division I or II sports. (This form cannot be mailed until you finish your sixth semester of high school.)