

SENIOR NEWSLETTER  
December 2009

**To Seniors: Important Message from Your Counselors:  
Ms. Dana Snell (A-G), Ms. Jacobs (H-O), and Mr. Nolan (P-Z)**

Your graduation year, 2010, is just around the corner and there is a lot to do in the next several months. Keep a close eye on all of your graduation requirements and create a month-by-month timeline for your senior year. Make sure you know all the deadlines for college applications. Below is a month-by-month timeline example:

September

- Register for October or November SAT and SAT Subject Test exams (check [SAT dates](#)).
- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss the colleges to which you're thinking of applying.
- Request [letters of recommendation](#), especially if you are applying early.
- Continue to visit campuses and interview with college admissions representatives.
- Request applications from all the schools to which you might apply.
- Create a chart of deadlines. Pay particular attention to early decision, early action, and preferred application deadlines.
- If appropriate, register for the October ACT exam.
- Work on your [college essays](#).
- Try to assume a leadership position in an extracurricular activity.
- Keep your grades up.

October

- Take the SAT, SAT Subject Test and/or ACT as appropriate.
- Continue to research schools to [narrow your list](#) to roughly 6 - 8 schools.
- Take advantage of college fairs and virtual tours.
- Complete your applications if you are applying early decision.
- Research financial aid and scholarships. Do your parents' places of employment offer college scholarships for employee children?
- Get your college essay in shape. Get feedback on your writing from a guidance counselor and a teacher.
- Request your high school transcript and check it for accuracy.
- Keep track of all application components and deadlines: applications, test scores, letters of recommendation, and financial aid materials. An incomplete application will ruin your chances for admission.

November

- Register for the December SAT or ACT if appropriate.
- Take the November SAT if appropriate.
- Don't let your grades slide. It's easy to be distracted from school work when working on applications. Senior slump can be disastrous for your admissions chances.
- Make sure you've submitted all components of your applications if you are applying to colleges with November deadlines for early decision or preferred application.
- Put the final touches on your application essays, and get feedback on your essays from counselors and/or teachers.
- Continue to research scholarships.

December - January

- Complete your applications for regular admissions.
- Make sure you've had your test scores sent to all colleges that require them.
- Confirm that your letters of recommendation have been sent.
- Submit the [FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Financial Aid).
- If you are accepted to a school through early decision, be sure to follow directions carefully. Submit required forms, and notify the other schools to which you applied of your decision.
- Continue to focus on your grades and extracurricular involvement.
- Have midyear grades sent to colleges.
- Continue to keep track of all deadlines and application components.

- Continue to research scholarships. Apply for scholarships well in advance of deadlines.

#### February - March

- If you submitted the FAFSA, you should receive the [Student Aid Report](#) (SAR). Carefully look it over for accuracy. Errors can cost you thousands of dollars.
- Contact colleges that didn't send you a confirmation receipt for your application.
- Don't put off applying to schools with rolling admissions or late deadlines -- the available spaces can fill up.
- Talk to your school about registering for AP exams.
- Keep your grades high. Colleges can revoke offers of admission if your grades take a nosedive senior year.
- Some acceptance letters may arrive. Compare financial aid offers and visit campus before making a decision.
- Don't panic; many, many decisions are not mailed out until April.
- Continue applying for appropriate scholarships.

#### April

- Keep track of all acceptances, rejections, and waitlists.
- If waitlisted, [learn more about waitlists](#) and move ahead with other plans. You can always change your plans if you get off a waitlist.
- Keep your grades up.
- If you have ruled out any colleges that accepted you, notify them. This is a courtesy to other applicants, and it will help the colleges manage their waitlists and extend the correct number of acceptance letters.
- Go to accepted student open houses if offered.
- A couple circumstances may warrant an [appeal of a college rejection](#)

#### May - June

- Avoid senioritis! An acceptance letter doesn't mean you can stop working.
- Most schools have a deposit deadline of May 1st. Don't be late! If needed, you may be able to request an extension.
- Prepare for and take any appropriate AP exams. Most colleges offer course credit for high AP scores; this gives you more academic options when you get to college.
- Have your final transcripts sent to colleges.
- Send thank you letters to everyone who helped you in the application process. Let your mentors and recommenders know the results of your college search.
- Keep on top of procuring student loans. Notify your college if you receive any scholarships.
- Graduate. Congratulations!

#### July - August after Senior Year

- Read all mailings from your college carefully. Often important registration and [housing](#) material is sent in the summer.
- Register for your classes as soon as possible. Classes often fill, and registration is usually on a first-come, first-served basis.
- If you get your housing assignment, take advantage of the summer to get to know your roommate (email, facebook, the phone, etc). Figure out who will bring what. You don't need two TVs and two microwaves in your tiny room.
- Off to college! Visit [Kelci Lynn, About.com's expert on College Life](#)

GRADUATION PACKETS are available in the office from Mrs. Eisele. The deadline for ordering graduation products is December 15, 2009. Orders received after that will be subject to price increases and product restrictions. You can order online at [www.nationalachiever.com](http://www.nationalachiever.com) or call 1.800.800.4083. National Achiever's mailing address is 13027 Bothell Everett Hwy. #E, Everett, WA 98208.

#### Academic and Department Honors

Semester I ends on January 28, 2010. With the end of the semester you may pick up an academic honors application in the guidance office. The due date for all academic honors applications is February 17. Department honors vary so check with the individual teachers about the particular honor(s) you are pursuing.

### SENIOR CULMINATING PROJECT

The Senior Culminating Project is a GRADUATION REQUIREMENT for the Class of 2010. This project includes new students and those attending Running Start. Students in Advisory classes began work on this project last year and additional information will be provided this year. If you are not in Advisory, please submit your work to Ms. Datisman, Library. Information and instructions are also available in the handbook and online: <http://www.portangelesschools.org/pahs/senior-culminating-project>. Choose Class of 2010, SCP Handbook or Class of 2011, SCP Handbook if you are a junior.

As a senior, you're Essential Questions and Prospectus should have been approved. The I-Search paper was due on December 11. These dates apply to ALL students, including Running Start. If you have a question about your SCP status, please ask your Advisor or see Ms. Datisman, ext. 1601 or [edatisman@portangelesschools.org](mailto:edatisman@portangelesschools.org) to schedule an appointment. Presentations will take place on Wednesdays during the month of May 2010.

DO NOT PROCRASTINATE! This project is required and attention must be given to its importance and the time you have to devote will be a direct result of its success. Each project is unique and assistance is available for you.

### PLANS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Whether you choose to attend college or seek employment after graduation, it is important to begin now to formulate the goals you choose to attain.

### FOUR YEAR COLLEGES

Most colleges showed record number of applicants for this fall. Predictions are that this graduating class may very well set a new record for the fall of 2010. It is to your advantage to apply early to the colleges of your choice. Many colleges are sending the first round of acceptance letters and setting December 1 as a priority date for the scholarships. Be sure you are in that first round by submitting all pertinent materials to the college by the end of November. For students in the "maybe" stack, colleges scrutinize: 1) your essay and 2) the strength of your class schedule. The Head of Admissions for US stated: "We discourage seniors from taking a partial schedule. We have our own research showing that students pursuing a rigorous senior schedule do significantly better as freshman."

### TIPS TO ASSIST WITH ADMISSION TO A FOUR YEAR COLLEGE

1. Application fees: \$50 each for CWU, EWU, Evergreen State College, UW, WSU and WWU. Colleges prefer that you apply online.
2. Many Colleges will accept only official SAT or ACT scores. In other words, they are sent directly from the testing agency.
3. Your parent's social security numbers are required for FAFSA. Get the "pin" early and go online to utilize the practice FAFSA worksheet: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Counselors are asked to write many letters of recommendation for college applicants and scholarship notebooks. We are willing to comply on your behalf, but we request that you allow at least two weeks prior to the deadline, which gives the time to compose a thoughtful recommendation. Please provide a completed Student Information Worksheet, available in the Guidance Center that includes your honors and activities.

### RETAKE THE SAT OR ACT

If you are not satisfied with your SAT or ACT scores from last spring, you are allowed to take it again this fall. Although some students enroll in coaching classes, the best presentation is to schedule solid academic classes and maintain sound study habits. Make good use of the study guide online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). The next SAT and Subject Tests are scheduled for January 23, 2010. The next SAT Only test is scheduled for March 13, 2010. The registration deadline is February 4, 2010. Sign up online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

### COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

These schools are overflowing with students. Open enrollment – no SAT or GPA required – is available, but please apply early to assure admittance. Specific programs do have separate admissions requirements. Now would be the time to start visiting and learning more about what's out there.

### RUNNING START STUDENTS

Schedule an appointment with your counselor as questions arise. Scheduling an appointment provides the necessary time as opposed to simply "dropping by."

## SCHOLARSHIPS

The scholarship assembly is scheduled for May 18th in the auditorium. More information will be forthcoming.

## FINANCIAL AID

There will be a financial aid meeting on Thursday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the library. Christa Francis from Peninsula College will be helping parent fill out forms. Be sure to bring 2009 income information and your FAFSA forms.

The private colleges are more expensive, but that fact often enables them to waive a portion of your tuition. A college's "first offer" ends at that offer. Additional funds can be requested however. It is acceptable to let College A know that College B is offering you a higher amount of aid and you are allowed to request that College A match that funding amount.

There are at least five sources available for financial aid in the form of scholarships: 1) local scholarships 2) government sources 3) regional and national scholarships 4) the college you plan to attend 5) your family.

## GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL AID

The Free Application of Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be filed as soon after January 1, 2010 as possible in order for a student to be eligible for federal and state aid based on need. Access the online form to become familiar with the requirements. You and your parents can track the family income for calendar year 2009 so that you do not wait until the end of January for employer income totals.

## WEBSITES

<http://fafsa.ed.gov>

This is the free site available to students and parents to file the FAFSA online.

[www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)

This site allows both student and parents to apply for a PIN number online. Students and parents should apply now to insure that everything is in place by January 1, 2009.

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

This site has a variety of financial aid offerings.

There may be a small population of students that are classified as exceptions to the financial aid rules. If you are living on your own, or your family's income decreases dramatically during 2009, or you move from one parental home to another, or you have any other unusual family situation, please see your counselor for specific information and assistance.

Colleges prefer that you apply online. You will be notified by email in 3-5 days if you apply online for financial aid. It will take 12-20 days if you apply by mail to FAFSA. The pre-application worksheet will be available soon. Access the website above to determine your PIN so that you are prepared to apply after January 1.

## REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP GUIDES AND PROGRAMS

The Career Center has a compilation of website addresses for computer search programs on the Internet. The service and information is provided free of charge. A few of the many websites:

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

[www.srnexpress.com](http://www.srnexpress.com)

[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)

[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

[www.student-services.com](http://www.student-services.com)

[www.collegenet.com/mach25](http://www.collegenet.com/mach25)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.go-college.com](http://www.go-college.com)

## SELECTIVE SERVICE

Note: Males who are 18: Not registering for Selective Service means you will not qualify for financial aid. Register within 30 days of your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. You may register online: [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)

## ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

This program is a government program that assists students financially. One weekend a month of paid active duty is required and the Guard will also assist with tuition and text expenses. An Army National Guard recruiter makes frequent visits to the high school campus. You may also access the Guidance for detailed information.

It is possible to earn up to \$70,000.00 for college by enlisting in the military. Speak to Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine, or Navy recruiters to determine which program meets your needs. Recruiters are available on campus during lunch or you may schedule appointments at the local office sites.

## COLLEGE VISITS AND TOURS

As information becomes available it will be posted in the bulletin.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

This section of the newsletter will announce scholarships that require a separate application and those not covered in the Scholarship Notebook. New information regarding scholarships will be included in the Senior Newsletter. Most scholarships have a website address. You may apply online or you can obtain information and applications in the Career Center. Scholarships will be added as they arrive. Check deadline dates carefully.

Applications for the **Ewing Kelley** scholarship are in the Guidance Office. They are offering up to 50 \$2500 scholarships to students in the Cascade region. Students with composite scores of 20 on the ACT or 840 on the SAT are eligible. A financial statement is required. See Mrs. Robertson in the guidance office.

WHITMAN COLLEGE: Music auditions and scholarship information. Info: [music@whitman.edu](mailto:music@whitman.edu)

WHITMAN COLLEGE: **William O. Douglas Scholarship Program** for students of families in which you are the first member to attend college, students from multicultural backgrounds, and/or students who have been active in issues regarding multiculturalism. Info: [www.whitman.edu](http://www.whitman.edu)

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY: Various merit-based scholarships. Must meet admission eligibility criteria by March 1 for scholarship consideration. Info: [www.admissions.colostate.edu](http://www.admissions.colostate.edu)

RESOLVE TO EVOLVE SCHOLARSHIP: \$10,000.00 essay scholarship. Info: [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY: \$4,500 RENEWABLE Academic Recognition Award automatically awarded to WA residents in the top 25% of the class. Award for Competitive Excellence: two levels, based on college preparatory curricula. Info: [www.financialaid.iastate.edu](http://www.financialaid.iastate.edu)

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU STUDENTS OF INTEGRITY SCHOLARSHIP: Scholarship based on essay theme: *The Importance of Ethics and Integrity in the Marketplace*. Info/application online: [www.thebbb.org/scholarship.htm](http://www.thebbb.org/scholarship.htm)

WASHINGTON STATE EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION is offering \$1000 and \$2000 scholarships to students planning to attend technical programs, 2 year and 4 year colleges. Parents must be member of WSECU. Applications will be available on line on January 2 at [www.applyists.net](http://www.applyists.net) Access Key: WSECU. Due March 2

America's Milk Processors and USA Today sponsor the 2009 SAMMY award which is a \$7,500 scholarship to a senior student athlete. Only 25 are awarded nationally. Interested student can go to [sammy.bodybymilk.com](http://sammy.bodybymilk.com) Due March 6.