College Planning Timeline

Freshman Year

- [ ] Build strong academic, language, mathematics and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
- [ ] Study hard and get excellent grades. **Your transcript begins now.**
- [ ] Strengthen your vocabulary by increasing your reading.
- [ ] Browse through college literature or browse the internet to get an idea of what kinds of schools may be of interest to you. CFNC College Search is a great website to help begin the college search. Virtual tours of campuses are available on college websites and YouTube.
- [ ] Get involved! Find an extracurricular activity that you are passionate about and stick with it. Colleges look for involvement and commitment. They go hand in hand.
- [ ] Start a file to keep track of your extracurricular involvement dates (offices held) as well as any awards or internships you may have. This will serve you well when you are filling out college and scholarship applications in just a few short years.
- [ ] If you go on a summer vacation or have time during school vacations, make sure to visit a college or two in the area.
- [ ] Start saving for college and look into financial aid opportunities if you have not already started.

Sophomore Year

- [ ] Sign up for the PSAT in September; take the test in October to practice for the SAT.
- [ ] Take the Pre-ACT at school in October/November to practice for the ACT.
- [ ] Keep your grades up and continue to challenge yourself with courses and extracurricular activities. Remember, try to focus on one or two extracurriculars and stick with them for the duration of high school.
- [ ] Remember that selective schools look for Honors or AP courses.
- [ ] Continue to file away all of your awards and dates of participation for your future applications.
- [ ] Take a career interest inventory and explore career and college major options.
- [ ] Think about summer enrichment programs (NC Governor's School and NC Summer Ventures are two great examples). See our Summer Experiences page for more ideas.

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- [ ] Go to the UNCA college fair, take advantage of the many colleges and universities that visit the Asheville High School campus, and talk to any friends you know who may currently be in college about their experiences.
- [ ] Planning to play sports in college? Register for the NCAA Eligibility Center.

Junior Year

- [ ] Sign up for the PSAT in September to prepare for the SAT and to make yourself eligible for the National Merit Scholarship, National Achievement Scholarship, and the National Hispanic Recognition Program.
- [ ] The college search continues! Continue looking into different schools and programs/majors. Make sure to keep your grades up, take challenging courses, and continue with extracurriculars.
- [ ] Update or create your resume and continue filing away your important dates and awards.
- [ ] Take the ACT in the spring at school, then register and take the SAT before the end of the year (then plan to take the one you feel you performed the best on at the start of senior year).
- [ ] If you plan to play sports in college, make sure to sign up for the NCAA Eligibility Center, speak with your School Counselor, and submit any needed forms.
- [ ] Meet with your counselor to make sure you are on track for graduation and your personal post-high school plans.
- [ ] Consider an internship or job shadowing experience in a career field of interest.
- [ ] Review colleges on the internet and visit college's websites.
- [ ] Continue visiting colleges.
- [ ] Try to find a summer program or internship that could provide you great exposure to your career interests and/or top college choices.
- [ ] Attend the College for Cougars Junior Night in early May.

College Planning Timeline

Senior Year

Parents To Do

- ☐ Create your own FSA ID if you don't have one yet. (The FSA ID is a user name and password you'll use to sign your child's FAFSA and apply for federal parent loans.) Note: You and your child must each create your own ID. If your child creates this for you or if you create it for your child, it will cause confusion later and slow down the financial aid process.
- ☐ Take a look at your financial situation and be sure you're on the right track to pay for college. If you haven't yet, attend a financial aid workshop.
- ☐ Gather the documents you will need to fill out the FAFSA (federal financial aid application) when it becomes available.
- ☐ Talk to your child about colleges and programs/majors they are considering and help them clarify their goals and priorities.
- ☐ Take your child to visit college campuses, preferably when classes are in session. Listen and let your child do the talking.
- ☐ Help your child find scholarships they may qualify for and assist with organizing these into a system. Proofread but DO NOT write essays for your child. Readers will know.
- ☐ Ask your employer about possible scholarships available for employees' children.
- ☐ Check out the free resources on www.cfnc.org and www.studentaid.gov.

Senior Year: Summer Before - December

- ☐ Register and take the ACT and/or SAT again (early fall semester), if needed.
- ☐ Start working on your Common App/college applications and pay attention to your deadlines.
- ☐ To request your transcript, please click here. Please note that for Common App and CFNC schools, your counselors will send your transcripts for you and you do not need to request a transcript separately.
- ☐ Review your transcript to make sure you are on track for graduation and double check your requirements.
- ☐ Complete the NC Residency process as soon as possible if you haven't already. You will need to complete this and have your Residency Certification Number (RCN) before finishing applications to any NC colleges.
- ☐ Attend the Senior College Prep Night in early September.

College Planning Timeline

- [ ] Keep visiting colleges!
- [ ] Ask your counselor, teachers, and employers for letters of recommendation early. Give at least two weeks before your deadlines.
- [ ] Keep working hard! You are in the home stretch, but senior year grades, including second semester, can affect many things (scholarships, acceptances, etc.).
- [ ] Don't slack off in your course load. Colleges will be looking at your senior schedule and want to see that you are still challenging yourself.
- [ ] Continue with extracurriculars. Remember that it is important to choose something and stick with it.
- [ ] Attend the college fair and meet with college admissions as they visit the high school.
- [ ] Start the financial aid application process and check colleges to see if you qualify for scholarships offered.
- [ ] FAFSA opens beginning October 1 (projected, may vary); complete it as early as possible.
- [ ] If you plan to play sports in college, make sure to sign up for the NCAA Eligibility Center, speak with your School Counselor, and submit any needed forms.

Senior Year: January - May

- [ ] Complete the FAFSA by the March deadline if you have not already done so.
- [ ] Visit colleges one more time before you commit.
- [ ] Keep working hard in class - colleges want to see seniors maintain their grades until graduation.
- [ ] Compare financial aid packages from different schools.
- [ ] Decide which college to attend, and notify the school of your decision by the deadline.
- [ ] Send dual enrollment transcripts and official test scores if needed.
- [ ] Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork.
- [ ] Notify schools that you will not attend of your decision.
- [ ] Continue to look for scholarship opportunities.
- [ ] Keep track of important financial aid and scholarship deadlines.
- [ ] Sign and send in a promissory note if you are borrowing money.
- [ ] Notify your college about any outside scholarships you received.
- [ ] Enjoy the end of the year and graduation!