

Helpful Hints for the College/Scholarship Application Process

It is a tedious, time-consuming, and difficult task to find a college that suits your needs and then figure out a way to finish with as little debt as possible. One good idea is to begin taking the task seriously now....in your senior year of high school. The following handout is a guide to some of the things you should be doing during the course of the year.

1. **Take the ACT!** If you haven't yet taken the ACT, please pick up a registration packet or online registration information TODAY!
2. **Research, research, research!** You are all pretty familiar with colleges right here in Kansas. If you know where you want to go, that is great. If you don't, I would strongly encourage you to explore. Test the waters and see what is out there! The web allows you to do that in a way that your parents may not have had an opportunity to do. Check out the info outside the counselor's office. Talk to friends and family members who went to different places.
 - **Use your college visits wisely!** You all have excused days from school to experience colleges. I recommend that you go places where you haven't ever been, and I recommend using those days to see a variety of types, sizes, and locations of colleges.
 - **For example** *public vs private, liberal arts vs professional or vocational training, large vs small, in-state vs out of state*
 - **I'll help you set up your college visits if you would like.**

Narrow your list of options so you can...

3. **Begin the application process.** Many colleges have online applications. However, if you are more traditional in practice, see Mrs. Deterding. If she doesn't already have applications to many of your college choices, she can try get that for you easily. Almost every college will require an application fee. Because of that, you may want to have your list of options considerably narrowed before you apply. I would shoot for 5 before November, but this is completely up to you!
 - **As a rule, the sooner the better!** Most colleges have a priority scholarship deadline. That simply means that your application, grades, ACT scores, and leadership experiences will go through admissions, colleges, and departments first. This allows more people to see your credentials and consider you for scholarship before many other students have even applied for admission.
 - **Apply for admission and scholarships at the same time if at all possible.** When you apply for admission, it is best if your file is as complete as it can be before the November deadline.

4. **Stay in touch with Mrs. Deterding.** I cannot help you if I am not informed. Please come by the office and keep me up to date about your options. When something comes across my desk that I think will interest you, I can get you that information. If I don't know what you are thinking or what your areas of interest are, I just can't be of very much help.
5. **Apply, apply, apply for SCHOLARSHIPS!** I have scholarship information in the office. You are welcome to come and look through that at any time. As the year progresses, there will be more and more.
 - **In the fall**, the applications in the office will probably be nationwide scholarship applications (i.e. Discover Card, Coca-Cola, Target).
 - **In the spring**, the more local scholarships will be available—some not until after spring break.
 - **Don't overlook scholarships available at your churches and places other than here at school!**

A DOZEN WHAT NOT TO DO'S

(When filling out admission and scholarship applications!)

1. DON'T fill it out in pencil.
2. DON'T write like a sloppy elementary student—type it if your penmanship is poor. (But please don't have your mom do it for you!)
3. DON'T send in your first draft.
4. DON'T send it in without proofreading it.
5. DON'T send it in wrinkled.
6. DON'T send it in with fragmented sentences and misspelled words!
7. DON'T send it in with a truckload of white out on it!
8. DON'T send it in with missing information.
9. DON'T ask for a letter of recommendation on the same day it needs to be mailed.
10. DON'T guess your GPA or try to make yourself look better than your official transcript will reveal.
11. DON'T leave out important information about leadership roles, volunteerism, and participation in activities. Those things are all very important, especially for the priority scholarship deadlines.
12. **DON'T give them any reason to OVERLOOK you when they look at your application!**