

# Tips For The College Bound Student

- **Think about college early.**

If you decide college is what you want, be prepared to put forth a lot of effort. It takes serious work to get there, but it is also very rewarding. A little planning and preparation can make the process go very smoothly. Discuss this with your guidance counselor so they can help you prepare for college and assist you in reaching your goal.

- **Explore your financial options immediately.**

It usually takes a team effort to pay for a college education, so discuss finances with your parents as soon as possible. Since they may not be able to fund your education by themselves, it is important that you try to decide what you can afford, who will pay what, and how to get the money (i.e., loans, grants, savings or a job). It may be tough to talk about, but it gives you more time to work out a solution. Since you will probably apply for financial aid your senior year, you will need to have an idea of what you can afford beforehand.

- **Decide what interests you.**

Try to determine what you want to study in college. Select a major that you enjoy, and explore career options that interest you. Don't pick a career that pays well but doesn't excite you. You probably won't finish, and if you do, you may spend the rest of your life doing something that you don't enjoy. It is important that you select a major so you can pick out the right school for your needs. It is also a good idea to look closely at career options, because not all degrees will lead to a job you like, if any at all. If possible, talk people who do the type of work that interests you.

- **Do your homework.**

You will have to do a little research to find out which schools offer the major you desire. Schools vary widely in quality of education within any given degree area. You will need to consider issues such as cost, location, academic standards, and availability of financial aid. Visit any school you seriously considering.

- **Take admissions tests early.**

Most schools require you take the ACT or SAT test. These tests are also linked to most scholarship aid. Take the Act and SAT as early as possible and as often as you wish, to obtain the best possible score. You can take preparatory courses (or purchase special books to study on your own) that may dramatically improve your performance. These help you to understand the types of questions, the format of these tests, and

helpful test-taking strategies. Your guidance counselor can help schedule you for these tests.

- **Apply early for admission.**

Don't fail to be admitted to a school due to poor planning. Apply early to increase your chances of being accepted to the school of your choice. Colleges can become increasingly selective once they have already begun admitting students. Making sure you don't miss the deadline, or you may be forced to sit out a term or two. Also, don't rely on just one school. Remember--all the financial aid in the world won't help you if you fail to be admitted.

- **Apply early for financial aid.** (Notice a recurring term here?)

The same procedure described above applies to financial aid. Be open-minded and apply for all options. You can afford to be more selective when the offers come back. Males should remember to register for Selective Service at their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to remain eligible for federal aid.

- **Push yourself to do your best.**

Keep your grades as high as possible. Take college preparatory classes if available. Your guidance counselor can help you select appropriate courses.

- **Become well-rounded.**

Academics alone do not make the best students. You should diversify your interests. Participate in sports, hobbies, clubs, and community activities. You are going to college to expand your horizons, so start now. Learning to interact with a wide range of people, in a variety of circumstances, is a very important part of the college experience.

- **Learn how to study, and study how to learn.**

Even if you think you have good study habits, you can probably make your time even more productive. This can result in higher grades and often reduce the amount of time you spend in the books.

***GOOD LUCK!***

These tips are brought to you as a courtesy from Air Force ROTC.