

MCNEAL SAMS COLLEGE CONSULTING NEWS AND NOTES

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

- REQUEST:** Talk to your college consultant about who might be the best individuals to write in support of your college applications next fall. (See page 2 of this newsletter for more on the topic of recommendations.)
- PREPARE:** We know it is finally spring and you want to get outside and relax. But, we also know that April is one of the busiest months for juniors in particular. Sports, concerts, exhibits, and the dreaded AP exams all happen in the next few weeks. Be sure to allot time for you! Take care of yourself.
- FINISH STRONG!** Your junior year grades will be the last grades many of your colleges see before making an admission decision.



MONEY MATTERS:

Money matters - yes, it does indeed! According to the Education Data Initiative, the average yearly cost at a four year public university for an in-state student is \$25,707; for an out of state student, that figure jumps to \$44,014 for an out-of-state student attending a public university. If you choose to enroll at a private college or university, your average annual cost is \$54,501. In other words, regardless of what type of four year college you may choose to attend, your degree will likely cost between \$100,000-\$200,000.

There are certainly ways to manage those costs, scholarships being the most prevalent. And your McNeal Sams college consultant will work with you to identify scholarship opportunities for you to seek.

There are other resources to help you pay for college. These are through what is known as the need-based assistance process, or more commonly called financial aid. These resources consider your family's financial circumstances. You may be awarded grant moneys (moneys that don't have to be paid back) from the state, the federal government or from the college. You may also be awarded what is referred to as "self-help" moneys, those moneys that you either have to earn (through programs like work study campus jobs) or student and parent loans.

College Loans: Think Carefully Before You Commit!

Let's talk about student loans for a moment. The good news: you gain admission accepted to your dream school! The bad news: it's costly, and your financial aid package wasn't as generous as you'd hoped.

"That's okay," you think to yourself. "I'll just take out loans." Well, let's take a look.

If you borrow a total of \$40,000 in loans - that's \$10,000 per year - at an interest rate of 6%, you'll pay \$287 a month for the next 20 years - and a whopping \$28,777 alone will be the interest. If you borrow a total of \$90,000 (\$22,500 per year) at the same interest rate, you'll pay \$645 per month for 20 years - and nearly \$65,000 of that is devoted to interest.

Thinking about your education and life goals is important. The cost of college is a conversation to start early and have often. Hundreds of colleges offer an outstanding undergraduate experience, and you don't have to break the bank to get it. Ask us for ideas!

If you would like to learn more about the financial aid process, we suggest you review finaid.org. The website was created as a public service and is one of the most comprehensive guides available designed to help you and your family understand how to pay for college.

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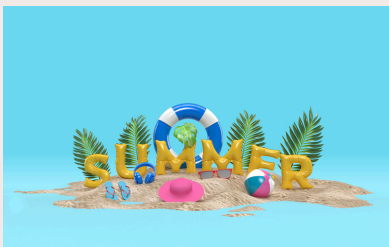
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NEWS AND NOTES

TALK AROUND TOWN

Some items we have found interesting recently:

Article: [7 Tips for Making the Most of Your Summer](#) by Jonathan Alpert



Podcast: [Inside the Admissions Office: Advice from Former Admissions Officers](#) by InGeniusPrep



Reading Recommendation: Any of the ["101 Great Books Recommended for College-Bound Readers"](#). List compiled by Good Reads. And, yes, there are even some that would make good beach reads!

KINDNESS CORNER – SPEAKING OF MONEY

For families for whom financing a college education is a concern, or for families who want to plan for the future, may we recommend conversations about money now, well before the time of finalizing a college list and applying is upon you. Knowing how much you can or are willing to spend on college, whether or not student and or parent loans are an option for you, and what everyone's expectations and hopes are now will be a strong foundation from which to build your list and make your decisions.

Unsure what a school you are considering will cost your family? Go to the school's website and search for the "Net Price Calculator". While not 100% accurate, most will provide a reasonable estimate of what you can expect to pay at that school.

FOCUS FEATURE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Before you leave for the summer, your school may encourage you to ask teachers for letters of recommendation in support of your applications or ask that you complete a questionnaire to assist your counselor in writing a recommendation in support of your application. Pay attention to these requests!

Typically, a selective college will ask you to submit three letters of recommendation as part of your application - one from your counselor and two from teachers. The counselor letter is designed to speak to your character strengths and who you are as a member of the school community. Teacher recommendation letters are designed to help colleges understand your strengths as a student and how you contribute within a classroom. Both are important components of your application.

As with all parts of your college application, you should be thoughtful and strategic about who you ask and how you assist them in understanding your college choice journey. *Be sure to talk to your college consultant about the who, how and what of your recommendation requests.*

ONE LAST THING: CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

As you head into the final weeks of your junior year, let's do a little progress check on where you are in your college choice journey. By now, you should have established three key criteria by which you are comparing schools and completed research on most of the schools your college consultant or your high school counselor has suggested. Do you need more schools to research? Have you begun to finalize the list of schools to which you will apply? If not, schedule time with your consultant.

You also should have begun to work on the components of your Common Application, the resume, the activities listing, brainstormed essay ideas, completed some or most of the core part of the Common Application. If not, schedule time with your consultant.