

# Countdown to SUNY



12<sup>th</sup>  
Grade Plan

## SUMMER - Prior to your senior year

- Narrow your focus**
- **Take** the SAT II subject tests if your potential colleges require them and you have finished the curriculum which would help you score well. (If you and your family are experiencing financial hardship, ask your counselor about a fee waiver.)
    - **Narrow** your list of colleges to 4-8. Make sure these are a right match for you. Just because a relative attended an Ivy League school, doesn't mean it is a good fit for you.
    - **Visit** the three schools at the top of your list (be sure to include SUNY). Schedule your visit in conjunction with a family vacation or when colleges are hosting events.
    - **Decide** whether you'll apply as an Early Decision or Early Action candidate and begin preparing your application for admission. These deadlines are typically in early to mid-November of your senior year.
  - **Compose** rough drafts of essays and ask your family, friends, and teachers to review your essays for grammar, punctuation, readability, and content.
  - **Contact** coaches, if applicable, and include your high school sports schedule and game tapes. Be sure to tell them why you are interested in their program and school.
  - **Create** an arts portfolio, if applicable, to showcase your performing, visual or creative arts work. Your portfolio may include essays, photographs, illustrations, slides or other forms of artwork. A portfolio should represent your best creative work from class projects or assignments and be consistent with portfolio instructions given by an individual campus program.

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

- **Have** a strong senior year . . . take at least four academic courses and earn good grades. Colleges may ask to review your mid-year grades.
- **Review** your high school transcript in mid-September to be sure it is accurate.

- **Plan** ahead! This is a busy time for your school counseling office. Provide your counselor with a list of schools to which you intend to apply and give him/her a list of dates for letters, forms, etc.
- **Identify** teachers and counselors from whom you will ask for letters of recommendation. Give serious consideration to teachers that can speak to the rigor of your curriculum and your potential for success.
- **Discuss** essay topics with your teachers and/or counselor. If you haven't done so already, write a first draft of your college essay. Visit the College Board at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/tips-for-writing-an-effective-application-essay-college-admissions> for tips on writing your essay.
- **Organize!** Create a folder for each college to which you are applying and make special note of deadlines. Also create separate folders for tests you've taken or plan to take, financial aid forms and fee waivers.
- **Inquire** about dates (and pre-registration dates) for upcoming standardized tests such as the ACT, SAT and AP.
- **Create** a résumé which includes your high school graduation date, grade point average, class rank, standardized test scores, special courses taken, academic honors and awards, activities (including athletics, leadership, community service, and work), interests and major goals. Keep your résumé brief. . . one to two pages maximum.
- **Apply to SUNY** at [www.suny.edu/applysuny](http://www.suny.edu/applysuny). It's fast, easy, secure and available 24/7. Check out the Online Application Worksheet at [www.suny.edu/student/forms.cfm](http://www.suny.edu/student/forms.cfm) to draft your answers first.
- **Attend** upcoming college fairs - most will occur in September, October and November.
- **Keep** your counselor updated about where you've applied for admission and let him/her know how you've applied (SUNY Application, Common Application, etc.).

Be  
organized

- **Remember** to print and proofread your entire application before submitting it for review.
- **Submit your SUNY Online Academic Record (SOAR)** to the SUNY campuses to which you have applied at [www.suny.edu/soar](http://www.suny.edu/soar). You will need to request an unofficial transcript from your school counselor before you begin.
- **Follow-up** with your counselor and/or teachers to ensure that your letters of recommendation have been sent.
- **Contact** colleges regarding support services if you have a learning or physical disability.
- **Continue** to investigate scholarship opportunities. A good resource is FastWeb at [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com).
- **Plan** on auditioning for a music program or scholarship? Each SUNY campus has its own process for scheduling auditions. In some cases, the department will contact you directly to schedule an audition after receiving your application. Other programs ask that you schedule your audition as soon as possible whether you have submitted your application or not. Check with each campus about how and where to schedule an audition.
- **Plan** on playing a sport? Be sure to file the proper paperwork with the NCAA Clearinghouse – see your coach, athletic director or counselor, or go to [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).
- **Update** SOAR with your senior year schedule. Be sure to include courses in progress and courses you plan to take next semester.

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- **Attend** area financial aid programs or workshops.
  - **Focus** on financial aid and enlist the assistance of your parents/family members. For each college on your list, calculate the total cost of a year (two semesters) using the college's net price calculator. SUNY's calculator will be available at [www.suny.edu/student](http://www.suny.edu/student) under the "Paying for College" section.
    - **Give** your counselor enough time for completing forms and sending transcripts for scholarships for which you are applying.
    - **Practice** your college interview skills by participating in a mock interview. Ask your counselor for information or to organize an interview.

Maintain  
your  
focus

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

- **Stay** focused and keep studying.
- **Attend** area financial aid programs or workshops.
- **Ask** your counselor to send mid-year grades to colleges to which you've applied, if required.
- **Obtain** your financial aid PIN.
- **Ask** your parents/family members to complete their tax return as soon as possible – this is important as federal financial aid and most scholarships work on a first-come first-served basis. If your family receives assistance from government social services, make sure your caseworker knows that a copy of your family's financial budget will be needed in January. Go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and fill out your FAFSA.
- **Register** for May AP exams.

## MARCH/APRIL

- **Look** for decision letters.
- **Make** photocopies of all decision letters and scholarship letters/awards you've received and give them to your counselor. These copies will help your counselor know from whom you've heard and will enable him/her to compile yearly school profile statistics.
- **Maintain** good senior year grades. Failure to do so may result in your acceptance offer(s) being rescinded.
- **Review** financial aid and scholarship offers you've received. If you have questions, call offices directly.

## MAY/JUNE

- **Make** your college decision by May 1. Notify the colleges you won't be attending so other students who were placed on waiting lists can be admitted.
- **Send** your tuition deposit (if required).
- **Notify** your guidance counselor of your college decision and request that a final transcript to be sent to that college.
- **Notify** your counselor and those who've awarded you a scholarship (for scholarship recipients) about where you'll attend as most will send a scholarship check directly to the college you plan to attend.
- **Ask** your counselor to send your final transcript to the NCAA Clearinghouse (for athletes).

See  
you on  
campus!

*Links to non-SUNY Web sites and information are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement.*