

THE BANFF SCHOOL

College Planning Checklist: Parents/Guardians

Start Before Your Student's Senior Year.....

- ✓ Encourage your student to start and regularly update a spreadsheet and/or résumé of activities. You can help set it up, but he/she should maintain it regularly. If you notice along the way that something is lacking, suggest ways to engage in meaningful activities.
- ✓ Keep your finger on your student's grades. Consult a teacher immediately if you see a downturn so any problem can be resolved quickly and without an irrecoverable blow to the GPA. Make sure that your student is doing his/her best and living up to his/her responsibilities.
- ✓ Be aware of your student's course choices. Ensure that your student's course plan fulfills the appropriate diploma requirements.
- ✓ Regularly ask your student about his/her college interests. Take time to look at potential colleges with him/her online. Make time to visit any schools you can.
- ✓ Have frank discussions with your student about realistic college options (location, cost, chance of acceptance, etc.). Don't let him/her set his/her heart on a school that is not possible without hefty scholarships. Allow the dream and ambition, but insert practicality into the mix.
- ✓ Have your student take any appropriate exams for college entrance as well as decide if any need to be taken again.
- ✓ Ask your student if he has requested any recommendation letters.

Add to Your List The Summer Before the Senior Year.....

- ✓ Continue to visit colleges.
- ✓ Encourage your student to maintain involvement in extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Help your student narrow college choices and decide to which schools he/she is going to apply. Be aware of dates and deadlines.
- ✓ Push your student to get started on applications. He/she can write essays before the application period opens. Applications can be done prior to the first day a college will accept them. Remember, highly qualified students will compete for admission to the top colleges as soon as the schools will accept applications!

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During the Senior Year.....

- ✓ Determine with your student if he/she needs to take any more college admission tests. Many seniors retake college admission tests, such as the SAT and the ACT, in the fall to try to boost scores for college admission and/or scholarships. (Note: Only one set of scores is needed to apply to college. Once the application is complete, a student can continue to add to the information.)
- ✓ Offer to look over your senior's college applications. Sit with him/her if this is what it takes to get it done! Just remember to let it be the work of the student; your role is that of a counselor, editor, proofreader, and supporter.
- ✓ Be available when your student submits the applications. He/she will need your credit card for the application fees!
- ✓ Help your student find and apply for scholarships. Perhaps you are part of an organization that offers one! Also help him/her navigate through scholarship and financial aid applications, as they will require family financial information. Be aware of financial aid/scholarship deadlines; they come quickly!
- ✓ Gather financial documents. To apply for most financial aid opportunities, your student will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You will need your most recent tax returns and an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA, which opens Oct. 1. Parents need to be prepared to file a current tax return in January to update/complete the FAFSA.
- ✓ Help your student process college responses. Encourage, support, and guide him/her through his/her options and decisions.
- ✓ Review financial aid/scholarship offers together. Decide what plans/packages offer good options for your family. Work out a budget you can all agree will work.
- ✓ Ensure that your senior follows through with accepting/rejecting college admissions for the schools to which he/she has been accepted. Colleges vary on this. Some require formal letters, while others require that students sign up for conferences by a certain date. Don't let a deadline pass by....it could lead to heartbreaking consequences!
- ✓ Help your student apply for housing as soon as possible if this wasn't done already.
- ✓ Encourage your senior to stay motivated and to finish the senior year in a strong manner!
- ✓ Start making concrete plans to get your student settled into college!