



To Know Christ and to Make Him Known through Christian Education

College Planning Guide for Seniors

Fall

- Begin in earnest to narrow your college choices. Usually, 3 to 5 well thought out choices are appropriate. As needed, meet with the Guidance Counselor to discuss and finalize your selection process. A good rule of thumb among your 3-5 choices is to have at least one “safety” school among your “probable” and/or “reach” schools. Obviously, a “reach school” would be a very competitive one that has highly selective criteria for admissions. Also, colleges offer “Open Houses” in the fall for prospective seniors. Additionally, to further facilitate your decision making, private schools in Charlotte typically will host two fall College Fairs. Charlotte Christian will host its annual *National Christian College Fair*, and an area private secular school (either Latin, Country Day, Providence Day) will host the *National College Fair for Independent Schools*. HGCS students are always invited to attend both events.

- Communicate with the Guidance Counselor when applications are filed, either electronically or by regular mail. A “Transcript Request Form” must be completed by the senior and submitted to the Guidance Counselor to release records to the college(s). Transcripts will be mailed in a timely manner, but no later than 5 business days after receipt. “Transcript Request Forms” must *always* be completed and submitted to the Counselor for both college admissions and scholarship competitions throughout the senior year.

- Look carefully at the requirements and deadlines for making college applications. Typically, the “application season” is September 1 to March 15. However, “Early decision” and “Early action” applications usually have October or November deadlines, so pay close attention to those deadlines very carefully.

- Consider taking another SAT or ACT if scores from the junior year are below your expectations or don’t fall within the “middle 50% of admitted students” where you plan to apply. When registering on line or by mail for a fall test(s), please make sure you request to have your scores sent electronically to your schools of choice by including their four-digit codes. Above all, please know that colleges and scholarship sponsors will always “combine” the highest scores from all of the tests that you take while in high school.

- Please file the *CSS/Financial Aid Profile* if your college application requires it. Once the Profile is filed, it gives the college(s) a preliminary look at you as a potential candidate for their internal scholarship programs. For more information, visit www.collegeboard.com. A list of colleges requiring the Profile can be found there.
- Concentrate on pursuing scholarship opportunities. The Guidance Counselor will advertise scholarships and scholarship competitions throughout the year via intercom announcements, on the HGCS website, and by way of newsletters. Above all, please be mindful of eligibility requirements, deadlines, and application procedures.

Winter

- Provide the Guidance Counselor with college forms that require mailing your first semester grades. These forms are typically called “Mid-Year School Report” or “Seventh-Semester Grade Report.”
- Avoid the onset of “senioritis.” Often, this happens when college acceptance letters have been received. Please know that offers of admission are contingent upon “your successful completion of the senior year.” Therefore, second semester grades are very important!
- File the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). MOST IMPORTANTLY, please know that the window of opportunity to secure federally funded grants in North Carolina is between January 1 and March 1.
- Continue seeking scholarship resources through federal, state, and local agencies, both public and private. Parents should also check with their employers or business offices to determine if their companies offer scholarship/financial aid to employees.

Spring

- Expect final acceptance letters and financial aid/scholarship offers to arrive. They generally come in no later than mid-April. By this time, if you haven’t done so already, it is imperative that you visit your “first choice” college before accepting their offer of admission/financial aid/scholarship.
- Be mindful that some highly selective colleges require admitted students to take the SAT Subject Tests, usually in math and English, before starting college. The results are generally used for placing students in freshmen courses during college orientation. The registration process is the same as it is for the SAT I Tests. See the Guidance Counselor for paper registration materials or visit www.collegeboard.com to register.

- Consider remitting your deposit to insure a place in the freshmen class once your college decision is made (May 1 is usually the required deadline). It is also a kind gesture to write a “Thank You” letter/note to those colleges you do not plan to attend. This keeps the door open should you decide at a later date to transfer to one of these colleges.
- Attend your appointed spring/summer orientation as outlined by the college you plan to attend. This time on campus is a wonderful opportunity for both you and your parents to begin the transition time between high school and college. College orientations provide great information about freshmen course selection, dormitory life, and a myriad of other things you will need to consider before starting your college experience.
- Be mindful that if you are “wait listed” or “deferred,” please be in contact with the college admissions office and ask how to strengthen your application as you are nearing high school graduation. Also, make every attempt to find out when the college will notify you of their final decision. Don’t jeopardize another college acceptance by waiting it out beyond the May 1 notification deadline!
- Complete your senior year with the very best grades you can earn! This will insure your place in the college’s freshmen class and may potentially lead to further scholarship consideration by the college’s financial aid office.
- At graduation, please complete a form entitled “Final Transcript Request” and submit to the Guidance Counselor. Your complete high school transcript will then be sent to the college you plan to attend.

Summer

- Following graduation, take time to enjoy the “fruits of your accomplishments!” You have successfully graduated high school, and you are off to college within a few short months. Take time to thank God, your parents, family, friends, and your school’s faculty for their love, support, and encouragement in helping you realize your goals.
- Get to know your future college roommate(s), especially if you are taking “pot luck.” Exchange email addresses, phone numbers, etc. Taking these positive steps will help you reduce any concern you may have about getting to know others, especially those with whom you will be sharing either a dorm room or a suite.
- Prepare for all of the “incidentals” you will need when you go off to college, namely a checking account, computer, clothing, and other personal effects. Find out too if it is okay to have a car on campus during your freshman year. Parking on campus can be very expensive, especially for freshmen!

- Above all, please use the summer months as a time to pray with your family and to keep the lines of communication open as you make final preparations for college. Continue to demonstrate your love and appreciation to your parents for *raising you up in the admonition of the Lord*. This time of “bonding” will help ease any separation anxiety or second thoughts you may experience before leaving home for college. May God richly bless you and your family as you begin this exciting new chapter in your life! And remember God’s promise from His Word in the Book of Jeremiah 29:11: *“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”*