

# Monthly Checklist

## September

\_\_\_ Make an appointment with your counselor. Discuss plans for college and other plans for life after high school. Your high school counselor can provide valuable information. Reflect on your interests, strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments, outside experiences, goals and financial capabilities.

\_\_\_ Narrow your list of colleges if you haven't done so already. Decide on "safe," "probably," and "reach" schools, as well as your "dream" school. **Check deadlines for applications, test scores, financial aid, etc.** Note these on your calendar.

\_\_\_ Register for the SAT or ACT if you haven't taken it or want to raise your scores. Be mindful of registration deadlines. *If you qualify*, fee waivers are available from Ms. Cook. See the SAT/ACT page or additional details about test dates and fee waiver requirements.

\_\_\_ Plan visits and interviews. If you haven't done so already, visit schools you are considering. Make sure to visit with representatives when they are at Health Careers. These individuals can offer valuable information and can answer any questions you may have. Check the College & Career Center often for upcoming visitors and dates.

\_\_\_ Start working on applications and scholarship essays. It is very important to have essays ready for the early admissions deadlines.

\_\_\_ Inquire about scholarship possibilities from your parents' employers, civic organizations, religious affiliations and the College & Career Center. Listen to the daily announcements for new open scholarships and check the HCHS online database for updates.

\_\_\_ Start looking into housing options at the universities you are applying. Know deadlines and requirements.

\_\_\_ Update your personal resume. Only include activities from high school. Make sure it is complete and detailed. See the tips in this handbook for additional information.

\_\_\_ Ask teachers, counselors and other adults for letters of recommendation. Give the recommender ample time to complete their letter. Use the official request form for counselor recommendations, located outside of the Registrar's Office. A sample request form has been provided in this handbook.

## October

\_\_\_ If you are testing for SAT or ACT again, be sure you have registered on time for the October test date. See the SAT/ACT page for test dates and registration information.

\_\_\_ If you are interested in the military, contact the local military recruiter to register for the ASVAB.

\_\_\_ Finalize your essays for all applications.

\_\_\_ Prepare for college interviews. Use the interview tips found in this guidebook.

\_\_\_ Continue to check the College & Career Center website and with Ms. Cook for scholarship information. Also, check which college representatives will be visiting campus.

\_\_\_ Request transcripts as required by applications. See the instructions in this handbook.

\_\_\_ Pay for your SAT and/or ACT results to be send to the universities where you are applying if you did not send them when you originally tested. This process takes 2 weeks, so allow ample time to meet deadlines.

\_\_\_ Attend College Night at UTSA on October 15. Sign up at [www.gotocollegefairs.com/texas](http://www.gotocollegefairs.com/texas) to receive a barcode with your information for college representatives to scan at the fair. This will prevent you from having to fill out an information card at every table. Just bring your barcode along and let the representatives scan it!

### Thinking about going on a college visit?

Make sure to pick up a "College Visit" form from Mrs. Sandoval in the front office.

You are allowed 2 visitation days during your senior year. Be mindful that there will be "blackout dates," in which college visits are not allowed. Check with Mrs. Sandoval for these dates.

Completely fill out the "College Visit" form, including a parent signature. You must also present documentation from the college or university. This includes a brochure or a letter from the university.

This form must be turned in within three days, following your absence.

## November

\_\_\_ Submit college applications, including all required forms and documents, on time. Be aware of “postmark” and “received” deadlines. If you qualify for SAT/ACT fee waivers, you are also eligible for application fee waivers. Contact Ms. Cook for these waivers.

\_\_\_ Prepare for deadlines that occur during winter break. Leave plenty of time to request transcripts and letters of recommendation. Remember that the school, counselors, teachers and registrar will not be available during the holidays.

\_\_\_ Look into housing options more closely. After submitting admissions applications, many colleges allow you to begin submitting housing applications. Check the university website for details.

\_\_\_ Remember Early Decision and Early Action deadlines. See the information in this handbook for more details.

\_\_\_ Visit the College & Career Center for further financial aid and scholarships information. New scholarships are opening every day, so it is important to check back often.

\_\_\_ Attend financial aid workshops with your parents. Watch for workshops offered at Health Careers or at other locations in the San Antonio area.

## December

\_\_\_ Check that all application materials have been submitted to each school where you are applying. Check your status online to ensure that all documents have been received and requirements met. College and high school offices close for the holidays, so be sure to take care of everything before those dates.

\_\_\_ Expect early decision and early action replies.

\_\_\_ Plan to visit colleges during winter break.

\_\_\_ Spend some time researching scholarships over the break and apply to at least 2 or 3.

\_\_\_ Start thinking about FAFSA. Visit [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) and register to receive a PIN number. The application opens January 1<sup>st</sup> to submit your tax information. Don't be afraid to start the application— you can always go back and finish it later or update it with new figures.

## January

\_\_\_ Submit your FAFSA for processing. Your parents' and your income tax return should be completed as early as possible. (You, the student, only need to complete one if you had a job during 2013.) Information from the tax forms will be used to complete your FAFSA.

\_\_\_ Keep thinking about possible majors and careers. Take an honest look at your interests, skills and personality. Learn as much as you can about careers that interest you. Read about them and talk to people who work in your field of interest.

\_\_\_ Expect some admissions decisions to arrive at your home or through email. Continue to monitor your admissions status online.

\_\_\_ Continue doing well academically. Avoid senioritis. Many colleges and scholarship organizations pay attention to how you do up through your final senior grades.

\_\_\_ Keep track of all scholarships you receive. You must present proof in order for scholarships to be recognized at graduation. Put award letters in a safe place, including ones from colleges you may not attend.

## February

\_\_\_ If you have not done so, submit your completed FAFSA for processing. Don't be afraid to submit with estimates – you can always go back and finish it later or update it with new figures. Don't be afraid to ask for help filling out your FAFSA. Stop by the College & Career Center during lunch or before school for some assistance.

\_\_\_ Continue to apply for scholarships. Don't forget that the College & Career Center is a huge resource. New applications will be on the daily announcements.

\_\_\_ Expect to receive admissions decisions at home or through email.

\_\_\_ Expect the Student Aid Report (SAR) through email. You should receive this about a week after you submit your FAFSA. It will show your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Look for errors and correct them online if any are present.

## March

\_\_\_ **Your FAFSA must be submitted by March 15.** This is the priority deadline for financial aid for most colleges and universities.

\_\_\_ Complete the registration process for community college, if you are planning to attend. Complete your modules and submit all required documents.

\_\_\_ Expect more admissions decisions.

\_\_\_ If you are on a wait list, send in new material or information (recent achievements, awards and honors) that might be considered to help boost your chances.

\_\_\_ Check scholarship deadlines. Many deadlines fall at the middle and end of March.

\_\_\_ Turn in scholarships you've received to Ms. Soto in the front office. Bring a copy of the award letter for scholarships awards that will be listed in the graduation program.

## April

\_\_\_ Narrow down your choices by reviewing the pros and cons of each school where you have been accepted. Involve your parents in the decision. Don't forget to consider financial information.

\_\_\_ Expect financial aid award packages in the mail. This will have a breakdown of everything each university will be offering you, financially. These packages are sent out beginning in April, on a rolling basis, depending on when you submit your FAFSA to each school.

\_\_\_ Make sure all deposits and fees have been paid. **You must deposit at your college of choice by May 1.**

\_\_\_ Continue to apply for scholarships and turn in any you have received to Ms. Soto.

\_\_\_ If you are planning to attend community college, be sure you have completed all modules and turned in all necessary documents. You can also start attending advising. Make sure to stay in contact with the college representative when she visits campus during lunch.

## May

\_\_\_ Forms regarding housing, roommates, courses, orientation, etc. may start arriving from the college you will be attending. Respond to these quickly.

\_\_\_ Make sure to sign up for an orientation date — slots tend to fill up fast.

\_\_\_ Thank all adults who wrote letters of recommendation on your behalf.

\_\_\_ Sign up for summer school, if needed. Obtain a summer job and/or volunteer for community service. Keep active.

\_\_\_ Make sure you have completed the necessary paperwork and submitted appropriate fees to Mrs. Spiekermann in the Registrar's office for ordering **final transcripts** to be sent the school you will be attending in the fall. If you have taken dual credit courses, you will have to request a transcript from Northwest Vista College beginning in June. This can be done online through your ACES portal or in person. It is your responsibility to have your dual credit transcript is sent to the institution you will be attending in the fall.

\_\_\_ Keep in touch with wait-list schools you would still like to attend. Write a letter to express your enthusiasm for attending. Let the schools know about recent awards and achievements you have received.

Graduation is almost here! You made it!!

### Things to Consider When Choosing the Correct Undergraduate Institution

- Size of the student body (small, mid-size, large)
- Location (urban, rural, suburban)
- Academic programs (does the institution offer majors of interest? Does the institution provide a broad liberal arts curriculum, or is it a technology-centered curriculum?)
- Faculty (student to faculty ratio, research being done by faculty)
- Research (funding, projects, opportunities for undergraduates)
- Campus life (residence halls, dining plans, clubs and organizations, athletics, Greek life, etc.)
- Cost (need-based financial aid, merit/athletic scholarships, grants, cost of attendance)
- Diversity (existing programs supporting diverse students and students traditionally underrepresented in the STEM disciplines)
- Retention and graduation rates

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