

DELBARTON CALENDAR FOR COLLEGE PLANNING JUNIORS AND SENIORS

Counselors: Mr. Michael Rosenhaus, Director of College Counseling; Mr. Sean Flanagan; Mr. Nicholas Linfante and Mrs. Kelly Gleason

Fall Junior Year

During the fall of your junior year you will have individual guidance meetings with your junior guidance counselor Mrs. Gleason as well as a few small group college guidance meetings. These meetings will introduce you to the college selection process and provide information to help you begin your college search. In December of your junior year, when PSATs become available, you will have individual meetings with Mrs. Gleason to discuss the results of your PSATs and to plan your strategy for future testing. Also, you should develop the habit of checking your Delbarton email for important announcements from guidance.

Winter Junior Year

College Choice

In January and February you will begin one-on-one sessions with one of the senior counselors. Also, you should plan to meet with your parents and one of the senior counselors between February and June. While conducting your college search, you might find it helpful to confer with the many recent college graduates among the lay faculty regarding your potential college choices. Finally, during the junior year, you should begin visiting colleges. This may take the form of a short visit to the campus with your parents to discover the feel of the college. It is advisable to visit different types of schools, such as private and public, or urban and rural, because you really won't know what you like until you see it. When you visit a campus, be sure to stop at the admissions office for the tour and/or a group information session. In many cases, you must make an appointment in advance for a college tour. If the college recommends an interview and you are particularly interested in the college, schedule an interview with an admission officer before or after the tour. Ordinarily, interviews can wait until another visit in the fall of your senior year, and most colleges no longer give on-campus interviews. But certain colleges, generally the small liberal arts schools, welcome interviews from every candidate beginning in the middle of the junior year through the middle of the senior year. Check with the individual college admissions office or with Mr. Rosenhaus, Mr. Flanagan or Mr. Linfante on this. Juniors are allowed two excused absences for college visits.

Testing, Courses

Your basic premise regarding standardized tests should be that you should never take one unless you are well rested, alert, positive, confident and prepared. Only a few people will need a prep course beyond what we do in English and math classes here, but again, everyone should put in 30-45 minutes per night, 5 or 6 times a week, 4 or 5 weeks prior

to the SAT, ACT or SAT Subject Tests. The best book to use for practice SAT exams is *The Official SAT Study Guide*, published by the College Board, and for the ACTs, *The Real ACT Prep Guide*, published by Peterson's. In addition, there are free online courses available on the SAT and ACT web sites.

Since the College Board now offers a Score Choice Option and the ACTs have always been "score choice," you can take the SATs or the ACTs as often as you like. However, since some colleges do not support Score Choice, you should probably speak with your guidance counselor before making these decisions.

By the spring of your junior year, you should begin taking SATs (March, May and/or June) and/or ACTs (February, April and/or June). The dates you choose should depend upon your individual schedule and needs. The College Board no longer allows walk-ins or standbys, so make sure you register for the tests before the closing dates.

In the spring, you should also take two or three SAT Subject Tests, again after consultation with your guidance counselor. You should obviously take those SAT Subject Tests that you will do well in. Check *The Official Study Guide for all SAT Subject Tests* published by the College Board.

In February of your junior year, you will sign up for senior courses in consultation with Mrs. Gleason. Be sure to take a demanding curriculum and resolve in advance to do your best possible job with it. Colleges frequently refer to the importance of AP courses and advanced language courses. Also, plan a demanding summer for yourself. Acquire a good full-time job, or spend a month in the country of your target language, or go to NOLS, or travel great distances or pursue a passion. In short, allow yourself to be challenged to your outer limits. Do not spend another summer as a "beach bum."

Applications

The most important preparation for the application procedure takes place through the summer when you complete your autobiography or "brag sheet." This is an opportunity for you to think long and hard about yourself and to pull together your reactions and observations regarding your personal gifts and future aspirations. Mr. Rosenhaus, Mr. Flanagan, and Mr. Linfante will in turn use the "brag sheet" to write the School's recommendation, so it is imperative that you be as detailed as possible.

June, July and August

College Choice

You and your parents should meet with Mr. Rosenhaus, Mr. Flanagan, or Mr. Linfante if you haven't already done so. These initial meetings should take place before the end of June. During July and August, continue to develop a tentative list of colleges. Accumulate information and comparisons by reviewing college guides and catalogs,

noting observations, and most of all, by visiting, asking, discussing and listening. Finish your “brag sheet” and resume by August 15th. These are of critical importance.

Testing, Courses

Read extensively during the summer. Reading is the best preparation for the Reading and Writing sections of the SAT and the ACT. Begin to work on weak areas in preparation for the late August and/or October SATs, and/or the September and/or October ACTs. If you plan on taking the late August SAT and/or September ACT, you must register for those in late July.

Schedules will be available by the end of August and all schedule changes must be made by the end of the first cycle of classes (with the exception of AP classes). Approval for class changes is obtained from your counselors. Be sure your curriculum is strong and meets the probable requirements of the colleges and majors you are interested in.

Applications

Applications for the current year are usually not available until early August. But you should continue visiting, taking tours, having interviews, and attending group information sessions.

When applications become available online, make sure you note deadlines and requirements. Familiarize yourself with forms and start thinking about essay topics. Begin working on your applications at least a month before the deadline in order to allow plenty of time for a counselor to review them with you. Never submit applications without this review. **Never.**

Fall Senior Year

College Choice

Plan your itinerary for fall college visits (if you are applying early) and schedule interviews. You are allowed six excused absences for college visits (minus the ones from junior year). Call colleges for fall interviews in August or early September. Appointments for interviews must be made well in advance.

Attend sessions with the college representatives who visit Delbarton. Meet with Mr. Rosenhaus, Mr. Flanagan and Mr. Linfante according to the schedule posted on the College Counseling web page and the senior guidance bulletin board in Trinity Hall. Continue to develop your list of appropriate colleges. Check online for applications and catalogs.

If possible, college visits at this time should be overnights during which you should attend classes and socialize with students. If an interview is required (check the website

or The College Handbook), call the college well in advance to arrange it. In most cases, you can arrange to stay on campus with a friend, or the Admission Office will connect you with a student. If an interview is not required, yet it is available, try to schedule one. In any event, if you visit a college during business hours, stop in at the Admission Office to ask for materials, the campus tour, and for the group information session. It is important for them to know that you were there. In addition, should you be willing and able to play a sport for the college, visit the appropriate coach or his assistant at the athletic center. Again, call in advance to make an appointment.

Always, as common courtesy, send a handwritten thank-you note to the person at the college who interviewed you or to anyone else who helped you, such as a dorm prefect who gave you a room, or the college professor you spoke with from the subject area in which you might major, or even the tour guide.

By Thanksgiving, be sure the list of colleges to which you will apply includes three “safeties” you would not mind attending should a “long shot,” which might also be a first choice, not select you. Also, don’t be a “ghost” applicant. Visit your safeties and attend their meetings at Delbarton.

Remember, during your fall and early winter college searching, you must be eliminating college options as well as discovering them. Avoid the temptation to apply to too many colleges, thus leaving all your choosing until March and April.

Testing, Courses

Regular classes start in early September. Begin immediately to meet the intellectual challenges placed before you. Good September-February grades are essential. No “F”s or “D”s; “C”s will keep you out of the most competitive colleges. Keep in mind that your fall mid-term, fall end-term and winter mid-term grades are official grades of record and will be sent to colleges.

Seniors should check their Delbarton email accounts at least once a day for announcements pertaining to the college process. You are personally responsible for this.

Remember to register for the October and/or November SAT or SAT Subject Tests. Or, if you are favoring the ACTs, register for the October ACT. Registration for SATs and ACTs is done online. Registration for the December SAT, ACT or SAT Subject Tests closes in late October. During the two weeks between the end of the first term and the December tests, be sure to devote some time to preparation for the tests.

An appropriate time for class absences for college visits would be Columbus Day weekend. Seniors are also given a college day on the October PSAT testing day. The last cycle for fall term testing begins in early November. Seniors should not miss class from then through the end of the term.

Should you do special tutoring or take an SAT/ACT prep course before the October or November tests? Talk that through with your guidance counselor. If your scores are well below your predicted range, maybe you should. But at least be sure to prepare on your own daily for 4 or 5 weeks prior to the test. In any case, do not be afraid to take the SAT three times. Colleges record and judge you on the best scores only, no matter when you took them.

Applications

Go online to view college websites, their program of studies, their application requirements, etc. Begin to work online on the applications when they become available.

National Merit Semifinalists must complete their Finalist and Scholar forms in late September and early October.

During the fall, seniors should regularly consider the most appropriate and compelling responses to their college essays. In addition, they should feel free to consult with their advisors, their parents, their English teachers, counselors and other interested faculty on their essay responses and other questions regarding college selection. Consult the College Essay Writing Tips online at our College Counseling website.

Choose faculty member(s) to write your letter(s) of recommendation. The same faculty member will send the same letter to each college. For Common Application schools, the faculty member will be contacted online and will submit his/her recommendation online. This should be taken care of before October 1st for early application candidates. Actually, it is a good idea to choose the faculty members who will write your letters at the end of your junior year, thereby giving them ample time over the summer to complete them.

In addition, your recommenders must receive from you a resume of your accomplishments and aspirations. This should be a one-page summary of your “brag sheet” and is not optional. Because your “brag sheet” often contains self-critical material and is very long, do not give it to your recommender. The brief resume is better.

Early decision and early action applications will be due between November 1 and November 15. Consequently, work on these applications must begin by October 1. With all of your online applications, indicate that the School Counselor Report should be submitted to Mr. Rosenhaus, the Director of College Counseling, and provide his email address (mrosenhaus@delbarton.org). Prior to Christmas vacation, when most of this work must be completed by the counselors for the January deadlines, please give the counselors all the information they need, including a complete list of the colleges to which you are applying.

Before Christmas vacation, double check with your counselors on the progress of your essays, applications and counselors forms. Check with teacher recommenders also.

After Thanksgiving

College Choice

Complete college choices and visits.

Attend local college receptions when available.

From December through February, schools which require alumni interviews will be in touch with you to arrange a time for an interview with an alumnus. Be well dressed, well prepared, enthusiastic, and send a thank you note.

Early action and early decision returns arrive during December and early January. Respond according to deadlines and contracts. That is, if your early decision acceptance is binding, you must withdraw your other applications and you may not open additional ones. You may continue to apply to more schools only if your acceptance is not binding (i.e. early action). Finally, you may want to consider the mid-January or early February option for early decision offered by some colleges. Selecting the Early II or Second Early option, which it is called, may help you get into that “long shot” school which happens to be the perfect match for you.

Testing, Courses

For most seniors, colleges consider academic achievement during the winter term equally with the fall term achievement. The same is true of course for spring term. Indeed, colleges have been known to withdraw an acceptance in the case of a student whose spring term grades decline significantly from his fall and winter grades.

Advanced Placement examinations will be administered during the first two weeks of May.

Applications

Most college applications should be submitted between January 1 and February 1. It is advisable, however, to send them well before the deadlines, if possible.

From October through January 1, Financial Aid Forms (the Profile and FAFSA) may be obtained online. These should be completed and forwarded by your parents according to schedule. Most colleges notify on acceptance from late February through April 1. May 1 is the final reply date for almost every college. If necessary, visit the one or two favorite colleges which have offered acceptance before sending your nonrefundable deposit to your ultimate choice. It is unethical to register and deposit at more than one college.