



College Counseling – Sophomore Year

What Should I Be Doing This Year to Prepare for College?

Here are some suggestions and tips to prepare you for the college application process.

- ✓ **Academics** - Focus on doing the best you can in your classes. Attend office hours with your teachers for help or questions, utilize our NHS tutoring after school in the library, and reach out to your school counselor if you need any additional help.
- ✓ **Involvement** – Continue to join clubs, attend school events, sign up for volunteer experiences, and explore all types of activities offered. Deepen your involvement and try to take on a leadership role if possible. Read the Eagle Update, Daily Announcements, and TEAMS information for opportunities. SM Activities and Campus Ministry always have great ideas and events for students.
- ✓ **College Email** – Create an email you will use specifically for college (*JaneSmith1234@gmail.com*). Use this email if you sign up for college newsletters, register for a college tour, or add your name to any college website as a prospective student. This will be the email you will use for all college applications (Common App, UC App, Cal State App, etc).
- ✓ **Scoir** – Begin familiarizing yourself with Scoir, our SM College Planning Software Platform. Research colleges, build a potential list, and use your academic profile to compare admissions statistics.
- ✓ **Testing** – As a freshman, you took the PSAT 8/9 and this year, you will take the PreACT in the fall. Compare both tests and the results which give you a predicted score. These assessments will help you decide which exam you prefer to prepare for in the future. If you are taking precalculus this year, consider studying and taking an official exam (SAT or ACT) in the summer. Additionally, if you are a strong test taker, you may want to prepare for the official PSAT which you will take in the fall of your junior year. College Board offers free PSAT/SAT prep [HERE](#).
- ✓ **SM College Events** – Attend the annual **SM College Fair** in the fall and learn about the variety of colleges and programs offered locally, nationally, and even in other countries. In the spring, attend the **Mock Admissions Case Studies Workshop** to participate in an interactive “admissions” committee to get a firsthand look at how schools evaluate and select future students.
- ✓ **Honor Societies** – SM offers various honor societies you can join depending on your interests and academic achievements. Freshman can apply to the California Scholarship Federation after you complete your first semester. Review the list [HERE](#) and pay attention to deadlines as these have short application windows!



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- ✓ **Resume Organization** – Keep updating your resume with awards, participation, and new activities.
- ✓ **Scholarships and Contests** – You can start applying for scholarships now! Click [HERE](#) for SM's comprehensive list of options!
- ✓ **Class Schedule** – Work with your school counselor to prepare a strong schedule for your junior year. Balance sports, extracurricular commitments, family responsibilities or a job with the level of coursework selected. If you can, challenge yourself in the academic areas you enjoy. Grades are *very important* junior year so carefully plan a schedule that works for you.
- ✓ **Visit Colleges** – Register for a few college tours (locally or while traveling). Pay attention to the size of the school, culture, social life, and academic programs offered. Ask yourself if you can see yourself attending the particular school and keep track of what you like or dislike.
- ✓ **Talent Recruitment** – If you plan on pursuing college athletics or the arts, this is a great year to learn about the recruitment process. Familiarize yourself with NCAA requirements and all levels of play and make sure you are working with your coach. For the arts, work with your teachers to learn about building a portfolio, creating videos, and preparing for the audition process.
- ✓ **Summer Plans** – This upcoming summer can be a great time to do something meaningful to prepare for your post-graduate plans. Ideas include exploring a potential major by participating in a college program, getting a job, volunteering in an area of interest to you personally or professionally. Talk to your counselor about ideas and research using [SM's Summer Website](#).
- ✓ **PARENTS** – You have a few tasks this year to support your child's post-graduation plans. **1) College Financing** – Realistically plan your college budget. This is very important as you build your college list to incorporate merit aid/financial need. **2) College Parameters** - Based on your child and your family, consider factors such as distance, college culture, and cost. Begin having realistic discussions about potential colleges that narrow the search using the values you deem important.

Remember that college planning and preparation is completely individual! Look for schools that are a great fit for *YOU* and don't get caught up in the name or the school that "everyone wants to go to!"