College Readiness 101
This Is It!

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Why Go To College?

- Prepare for a career in the field of your interest/choice
- Make more money
- Have more options for yourself in the job market, lifestyle and where you live
- Set an example for siblings, relatives, children, and community members
- Be in a position to help those you love
The compelling case for college

College requires a significant investment of your time and money. In return, most students reap significant rewards that grow throughout their lifetime. For example, college graduates have the potential for significantly higher annual and lifetime earnings than high school graduates do. Consider the following information based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau:

- Average annual earnings for full-time workers with bachelor’s degrees ($52,300) were nearly 72 percent higher than for high school graduates ($30,400).
- Average lifetime earnings were 74 percent higher for those with a bachelor’s degree ($2.1 million) than for those with only a high school diploma ($1.2 million).

In addition, the average unemployment rate for college graduates is significantly less than the jobless rate for those with no college experience. College graduates tend to have a broader and better selection of job opportunities than do high school graduates. Broader employment options contribute to increased job satisfaction and upward mobility for college grads.

As you weigh the cost of pursuing a higher education, keep in mind that the return on your investment will be substantial. College may not be a good investment for students who drop out before completing their studies, however. These students typically incur greater costs than benefits from a higher education. College is a serious commitment, and you should plan accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average lifetime earnings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
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<td>Master’s degree</td>
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<td>Doctoral degree</td>
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<td>Professional degree</td>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau
College Is For You!

- There’s a program of study and a college for everybody
- You can be the first in your family to attend and graduate college
- Colleges consider more than grades and test scores when reviewing your application
- Financial aid is available to help cover the cost of your college education
High School Checklists...

- 9th grade (college prep classes, understand grade point average (GPA), start thinking about what you want to do in the future, research career options; volunteer during the summer)
- 10th grade (continue college prep classes, take a career assessment, and monitor your GPA, secure a copy of your transcript, meet with your HS counselor to discuss college-prep classes, and volunteer during the summer)
- 11th grade (secure a copy of your transcript, Take PSAE, begin developing your college essay, volunteer during the summer, and begin collecting letters of recommendations from teachers, et. al.)
- 12th grade (ACT, college application(s) and essay, letters of recommendations, apply for scholarships no later than Dec, and submit FAFSA no later than March 1st)
Choosing a College

• Before you choose a college:
  – Conduct internet research (take a virtual tour); determine your criteria
    • 2yr or 4 yr college?
    • Size of college
    • Academic program of study
    • Location
    • Cost
    • Admission requirements
  – Review course catalogue
  – Talk with those who previously attended
  – Talk with the Admissions office and schedule a visit with those colleges that are of interest to you
  – On a visit, attend information sessions and/or attend a class
  – Be sure to talk with a financial aid counselor
College Admissions

- Finalize your list of top 5 colleges (be realistic)
- Keep a college calendar of all admission deadlines
- Complete a ‘common application’ or complete ‘on-line’ applications
  With your application, you must submit:
  - ACT Scores
  - Transcript
  - Essay, if required (may be optional)
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Application fee may be waived or may require payment
- Complete FAFSA form (this form is required for federal grants and loans and for some scholarships)
- Apply for scholarships (by Dec.1st)
College Search Sites

- www.collegeboard.com
- www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.html
- www.petersons.com
- www.collegeview.com
- www.xap.com
- www.collegeconfidential.com
- www.careersandcolleges.com
- www.collegeanswer.com
- www.campuscompare.com
- www.campustours.com
Insightful Sites – Essay

- www.myessay.com
- www.admissionsessays.com
- www.goodessaytopic.com
- www.essayedge.com
- http://collegeapps.about.com
- www.scholarshiphelp.org/scholarship_essay.htm
Paying for College: Types of Financial Aid

**FAFSA**

- **Gift Aid**
  - Grants (qualify thru FAFSA)
- **Self-Help Aid**
  - Scholarships
  - Work-Study (campus job)
  - Loans – (repay)
Student aid is financial assistance for eligible students who need help paying for educational expenses at an eligible postsecondary school.

Federal student aid can be used to cover the cost of tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. This aid can also be used to help pay for a computer and dependent child care expenses.

State aid may only be used for tuition.
How to Apply for FAFSA

Federal Student Aid FAFSA

We have simplified the process of filling out the FAFSA. You can follow each section all of the way through for a comprehensive set of instructions.

1. Before Beginning a FAFSA
   - Get organized!
   - To simplify filling out the FAFSA, gather the required documents and other information.

2. Filling Out a FAFSA
   - Fill out the FAFSA! It has seven steps that ask about you, your school plans, financial information and more.
   - Fill out a FAFSA
   - Fill out a Renewal FAFSA
   - Fill out a FAFSA de Renovación en español
   - Continue working on saved FAFSA
   - Sign Electronically with your PIN

3. FAFSA Follow-up
   - Find your FAFSA online! You can go back to your FAFSA to check status, make corrections to a processed FAFSA and get other information.
   - Check Status of a submitted FAFSA or print Signature Page
   - Make Corrections to a processed FAFSA
   - Add or Delete a School Code
   - View and print your Student Aid Report

Scheduled Maintenance:

FAFSA on the Web will be unavailable on every Sunday from 5 a.m. to 11 a.m. (Eastern Time). We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.
General Eligibility

- High school diploma, GED, or equivalent
- U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Valid Social Security Number
- Register with Selective Service – males 18
- Seeking Degree or eligible credit Certificate
- Enrollment in minimum of 6 credit hrs per semester
Paying for College

Determining Your Financial Need
We use your Expected Family Contribution* (EFC) to determine your financial need:

\[
\text{Cost of Attendance}^* - \frac{\text{Expected Family Contribution (EFC)}}{\text{Financial Need}}
\]

To calculate your EFC, visit...
http://calculators.collegetoolkit.com
Adding up College Costs

- Tuition & Fees
- Room & Board
- Books & Supplies
- Transportation
- Misc. Living Expenses

= Cost of Attendance
Paying for College

- Financial aid is first-come, first-served
- Yearly tuition at a community college is less
  - Do your core curriculum at a CC and you’ll save up to 50% on your bachelor’s degree
  - ACT scores may not be the final answer for admission; may take CC placement exams
  - Class times vary and may be flexible so it fits your schedule (evenings, weekends, etc.)
Why complete the FAFSA form & other Tips

- Some grants and scholarships will disqualify you if you haven’t sent in your FAFSA
- Work-study will not be an option if you do not complete the FAFSA
- All males must register for selective service on their 18th birthday; if you do not, you will not qualify to receive federal aid (FILL OUT THE FAFSA)
Sites for financial aid info...

- www.fafsa.ed.gov
- www.finaid.com/calculators/loanpayments.phtml
- www.finaid.com/questionsnoloansforlowincome.php
- www.efc.org
- www.salliemae.com
- www.ticas.org
- www.bankrate.com
- www.simpletuition.com
- www.collegeparents.org/cpa/resource-everyone-financial.html
Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.

– Henry David Thoreau

If you wish to go to college, you must PREPARE NOW. After you prepare, you must APPLY. After you apply, you must FOLLOW-UP. Then the game of life really begins. Start living!