

# “Know-How-to-Go” After High School

## A Timeline for Soon-To-Be Seniors

It's easy to lose track of all the things you have to do to prepare for college. The list below will help you know when certain items in the college-going process should be addressed.

### May through August

- Sign up for the SAT if you are trying to improve your score.
- Make sure you're meeting any special requirements.**  
If you want to play Division I or II sports in college start the certification process and check with your counselor to make sure you are meeting all requirements.
- Visit colleges.**  
Take a tour and speak with admissions and financial aid staff. If you have a chance, talk with students you meet while on campus. If you have an interview with admissions, be sure to send a thank-you letter to the interviewer once you return home.
- Begin your **college essay(s)**.

### August through October

- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements.
- Keep working hard all year; second semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility and admission.
- Ask for personal references and letters of recommendation from teachers, school counselors, or employers (at least three weeks before application deadlines).
- Finalize your college essay(s) and be sure to have someone proofread and edit!
- Begin your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as early as October 1<sup>st</sup> at [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov) (This form now requires prior-year taxes.)
- Attend a Financial Aid/FAFSA Help event! Contact your local high school for dates and times.

### November and December

- APPLY for college during College APPLIED Week (**in October**)! Contact your high school for more information.
- Request and send your high school transcripts to all the colleges you are applying to.
- Find out if you qualify for scholarships at each college to which you've applied.
- Start the financial aid process. (You'll need your taxes done by February.)
- Visit the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation's website and learn about local scholarships ([www.ghacf.org](http://www.ghacf.org)). You won't be able to apply for scholarships until early January.
- Visit and/or revisit colleges that you have been invited to enroll in. (Can you see yourself there?)

## **January through March**

- Be aware that colleges ask for high school transcripts in January/February. Any college you've paid a deposit will be monitoring your student progress.
- Be sure your taxes (and your parent's taxes) are completed by the end of February if possible. (This will make applying for financial aid much easier.)
- Attend a **MI COLLEGE GOAL** in February to get FREE help filling out the FAFSA. Visit [www.micollegegoal.org](http://www.micollegegoal.org)
- Complete your **FAFSA** by **March 1st!**
- Watch your email for your Student Aid Report (SAR). It should arrive about one week after the FAFSA is submitted.
- Apply for scholarship opportunities through the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation. The deadline will be the beginning of March. (Visit [www.ghacf.org](http://www.ghacf.org))

## **April and May**

- Decide which college to attend and notify the school of your decision.
- Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork.
- Notify the schools you will NOT be attending of your decision within the specified timeline so your admissions deposit fee will be refunded.
- Make sure your final transcript is submitted to the school you will be attending.

## **June through August**

- Check with your college to ensure that the financial aid office has all needed documents to process your financial aid.
- Sign up and attend orientation.
- Take all necessary placement tests.
- Make an appointment to meet with an academic advisor to figure out which classes you should take.
- Sign up for classes EARLY!
- Getting a summer job can help pay some of your college expenses.
- Make a list of what you will need to take with you for your dorm room.
- If you haven't met your roommate, call, write, and email to get acquainted in advance.
- Learn how to get around at your new school. Review the campus map.
- Wait until after your first class meeting to buy your books and supplies.