Post-Secondary Planning Timeline

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Questions? Reach out to Mrs. Shanna Hood at shood@loyolacatholicschool.org

Junior Year

- ☐ Answer these Important Questions to help narrow down your college search on what you are looking for, and discuss these answers with your family.
- ☐ Use Big Future, College Navigator, and College Map to filter your college options with your personal preferences. Also, check out the college maps and pamphlets in Mrs. Hood's office and upstairs commons.
- ☐ Visit college reps who come to Loyola to learn more about different colleges. Even if you are not considering that college, you will learn more about what you are personally looking for and might be surprised that a college is a better fit than you first thought.
- ☐ Set up official campus visits. Check the calendar for upcoming no-school day options such as MEA break. *An official in-person campus visit gives you the best feel of the college, and it shows 'demonstrated interest', which increases your chances of admission and future scholarships!*
- ☐ Interested in an extracurricular activity? Set up a meeting with the college choir director, track coach, etc., during your official campus visit to learn more and see if it is a good fit.
- ❒ Create a professional, personal email address to use now and in the future (*You want a professional email for college communications, work applications, etc. separate from your high school account*).
- ❒ Decide if you are going to take the ACT. While some local colleges are test-optional, there are reasons to take the ACT test. Read this ACT or Not? to help you make your decision. If you decide to take the ACT, read this ACT Information for Loyola Students and plan to participate in Loyola's free ACT prep. Here is the link to register for the ACT.
- ☐ Review your O*Net results again from our College & Career Prep class. If you think your interests have changed, retake the interest inventory and re-review your career matches/fit.
- ☐ Job shadow, job shadow, job shadow! It is a great way to see if a future career field may be right for you.
- ☐ Utilize your Friday afternoons and non-school days for job shadows, ACT prep, and college campus visits.

SUMMER before Senior Year

- ☐ Check out MN Private Colleges and MN State Colleges for week-long special events held in June.
- ☐ Work on your college essay(s). Have at least 1-2 people proofread & critique your essay! Linked here is a fantastic college essay guide curated by Ms. Wertzberger to help you write a solid epiphanic essay.
- ☐ Update your resumé (and save it to your personal device or account).
- ☐ Do a social media check. Make sure your online presence reflects the image you want to project to colleges and career professionals.
- ☐ If the cost of college is a factor in your decision, *(which for most people it is!)*, look beyond sticker prices and dig deeper by using tools such as Net Price Calculator and Common Data Set to get a better idea of what it might actually cost you to go to the different colleges you are considering. Also use this Financial Aid Calculator to estimate your FAFSA Student Aid Index.
- ☐ If you did not score well on your AP exam, consider taking a CLEP exam to still gain college credit (remote proctoring is available for an additional fee). Check colleges' CLEP credit policies here.

AUGUST - OCTOBER of Senior Year

- ☐ Check if the colleges you are applying to participate in CommonApp. If two or more do, use CommonApp starting Aug. 1 to reduce the number of applications and essays you write. Check here if you're stuck on an application question. *Bonus: the college essay you wrote in Ms. Wertzberger's English class aligns with the CommonApp essay requirement!*
- ☐ Save money by submitting your applications to Minnesota State and South Dakota State colleges and universities between Oct. 1-31 for **free**.

- ☐ If an application requires recommendations, determine the type of recommendation needed (official letter or completing an online form) and ask adult(s) who knows you well to be your recommender. Provide at least 3-4 weeks' notice along with your updated resumé as a courtesy.
- ☐ On applications, submit transcript requests and "Counselor Recommender" to Mrs. Kari Koester (kkoester@loyolacatholicschool.org)
- ☐ **Apply to colleges by Oct 31st** for your best chance of admission and financial aid package. *Remember - you do not need to officially decide on which college you will attend until spring!*

OCTOBER - DECEMBER of Senior Year

- ☐ **Financial Aid**
  - ☐ First, register for a Federal Student Aid IDs (FSA ID) here. FSA IDs are needed to sign and submit FAFSA documents. Once a student registers for an FSA ID, parents must set up their own FSA IDs. (*note: It can take up to 3 days to get your FSA ID assigned once you register.*)
  - ☐ Electronically submit your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) ASAP in **October.** *(It is recommended, regardless of income, to complete this free application if you are considering taking out loans or receiving financial aid. Even if your financial situation does not qualify for free federal grant money, if a student and/or parent are considering loans, FAFSA can provide additional loan options for you to consider. Also, some colleges require the FAFSA to be submitted simply to be considered for merit-based scholarships.)*
  - ☐ Some colleges require the CSS Profile to be completed to receive financial aid, merit-based scholarships, etc., at their institution. Your colleges will note if CSS Profile is required.
- ☐ Search and apply for scholarships directly from your top colleges on each college's scholarship website. *Many college scholarship applications are due in December & January, particularly for the largest awards.*
- ☐ Bookmark Loyola's scholarship page - a few local scholarships will be available.

JANUARY - APRIL of Senior Year

- ☐ Apply for local scholarships (most local scholarships have deadlines between Christmas & Easter).
- ☐ Compare financial aid offers from colleges.

  This can be tricky since every college lays it out differently, so look carefully. You can use Financial Aid Offer Comparison tools, such as these options or this A.I. one to help. Additionally, know you may be able to negotiate or appeal a financial aid package if you have multiple offers from similar-type colleges!
- ☐ If you have taken AP classes, compare your colleges' Required AP Test Scores to see if your classes will earn credit at your top colleges. *(Find this information on your colleges' websites, or check MN OHE).*
- ☐ If you have taken PSEO classes, compare how and if your credits will transfer to your top colleges using Transferology, or search 'Transfer Credit Evaluation" on colleges' websites.
- ☐ By May 1st, make your post-secondary decision after comparing financial aid offers, considering personal preferences, credit transfers etc. If you are unsure, schedule an overnight visit or another campus visit with your top two colleges to help you make your decision.
- ☐ **Notify all colleges of your final decision by May 1st (*National College Decision Day*).**
- ☐ If you plan to attend a state college in Wisconsin or North Dakota, complete this tuition reciprocity application. If the college is in Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, or Ohio and is a member of the Midwest Student Exchange Program, complete the required documents for the tuition discount.

MAY - JULY

- ☐ If you have college credits from PSEO, request an official transcript be sent from that institution to the college you will be attending.
- ☐ Loyola will send your final high school transcript to the college listed in the program at graduation. If something changes, let Mrs. Koester & Mrs. Hood know.
- ☐ If you did not score well on your AP exam, consider taking a CLEP exam to still gain college credit (remote proctoring is available for an additional fee). Check colleges' CLEP credit policies here.
- ☐ Finish up your final college "to-do list" of items (housing form, orientation, registering for classes, etc.)