



The Family College Experience, LLC

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College Planning
College Applications
Resumes

Winter 2015-2016 Newsletter

December, 2015. Time to reflect back on the events of the past year, and start making plans for 2016. College students mark the end of the fall semester, with some well-deserved time off before the winter or spring semester begins. For high school seniors, the college applications have been submitted, and now the waiting begins. But there is still so much more to think about before you make the lists for Target, Staples and Bed, Bath & Beyond.



This is also an important time for high school juniors. There is still time to improve your gpa, practice for and take standardized tests, but—more importantly—try to find your passion. And for underclass high school students, this is the perfect time to start **thinking** about these issues.

College Students

Whether you've just completed your first semester, or you are a seasoned student, the end of a semester allows you to take a breath and evaluate the past several months. A few things to consider:

Academics: Did you take your studying seriously enough? Ask for help if necessary? Are you working towards a particular major or career path? What would/could you do differently next semester?

Activities: Have you found an activity that interests you? Any chance for leadership role? How are you balancing this with your academics?

Social: Have you engaged in risky behavior? How are you developing friendships on campus? Are you having difficulties with social, legal or mental health issues? What steps can you take if you are experiencing this?

College isn't just about "getting in"—this is a time period unique to one's life, where academics and career goals should balance with fun, but must coexist with deeper self-awareness.

If you are currently attending college, please take a few minutes to complete this survey so that we may help future students.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/familycollegeexperience-student>

High School Seniors

Hopefully by now your college applications have been submitted, although you may still be working on scholarship essays. It feels like EVERYONE is talking about college.

There's a lot on your mind as you deal with college acceptances and rejections, and compare notes with other seniors. Unless you've applied Early Decision, you don't yet need to know for sure where you will be going to college. The admissions decisions this year are proving to be challenging: while we are excited to hear about student acceptances to ED, EA and first-choice schools, there are numerous instances of students who are getting deferrals in record numbers, to institutions where they would even seem to be "overqualified."

Take the next few months to focus on exactly what you expect to put into and get out of college. You want to attend a place where you can get involved and do something other than go to class, the library, and your dorm room. Visiting the school, talking to current students, attending a class or speaking with a professor will help you see where YOU will fit in the best. Try hard to ignore the well-meaning advice of those saying which schools are "better" than others. If you don't get accepted at a particular school, remember that this is a large-volume business, and the school's decision has more to do with its

attempt to sculpt a class than it is a statement of your qualifications.

The spring newsletter will discuss topics including roommate selection, tips on deciding among schools, and preparing for the transition from high school to college.

High School Juniors

It is well-known that junior year is quite stressful. It is the last opportunity to shine in class so that you earn good grades before you apply to college. It is also the year of ever-present standardized exams (PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP). Regardless of whether you plan/hope to attend a competitive school, it is always in your best interest to do as well as you can on these exams, and to get the highest grades possible in the most challenging classes you are able to handle.

You should be engaged in self-assessment (formal “checklists” or just some deep thinking) about your strengths and weaknesses, your personality and your goals. At age 16-17 you aren’t (likely) ready to describe what you will do for the rest of your life. But it would be helpful to know yourself before you start researching schools. You should also visit some schools, if possible, because that is the best way to get a feel for the students and see the campus academic and social environment.

Most importantly, begin 2016 by taking steps in the college process—it may feel early but there are things you can do during the spring to make next August through November less stressful.



High School Freshmen & Sophomores

It is always important to do your best in class, and to challenge yourself as much as possible. At the same time, it is important to find an activity (or several) that you really enjoy. These things shouldn’t be done for the sake of college applications. They should be done because you are at the perfect age to stimulate your mind, explore your interests and become self-aware. You want to know enough about yourself so that in junior and senior year the college process can be driven by *your* needs, interests, and dreams.

It is not too early to think about planning upper-level courses, conducting research, or compiling musical or fine arts portfolios.

Parents

Regardless of where your child is along this timeline, it is a difficult adjustment for parents when a child is preparing to leave for college, or during the time the child is away.

Although as parents we are always looking to protect our children, often the best way to help them thrive in college and beyond is to take a step back. Be available to listen to concerns, and understand the difference between someone “venting” and a child in a situation where your involvement is necessary.

Discuss your values, financial considerations, and your parental expectations with your children.

If you have a child currently attending college or one who has graduated in the past 6 years, please consider completing our survey as we look to educate other parents.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/familycollegeexperience-parent>

Happy Holidays to all, and here’s to a Happy and Healthy 2016!

The Family College Experience provides resources and assistance to students and families throughout the application process, and provides information and resources about the transition to college. Call or email to learn about the services available, or to schedule a session.

This newsletter reflects the opinions of The Family College Experience, LLC.

If you have any comments or questions, suggestions for topics, or would like more information on services we offer, please visit our website, facebook page, or contact us.

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