



Before Senior Year

• A guide to COLLEGE PLANNING. •

Before Senior Year:

- Take the ACT: at Southern (through your counselor – given once in the fall and once in the spring), and/or at a national testing site www.act.org
 - Research ACT prep options in your area or surrounding areas (also ask your counselor)
- Make sure you have a valid email address to receive college information and to use when you start applying to colleges
- Explore college majors (what you would like to study in college, what jobs you would like to pursue after you obtain your college degree)
- Learn about colleges: look at their websites, talk to friends, family, teachers and recent grads of your school now in college
 - Identify the important factors in choosing a college for you
 - Two-year? Four-year? Location? Cost? Private? Public? Large? Small? Programs you need? Religious factors? Social environment?
 - Focus on your goals, career interests, special talents
- Make a "college file" with any college information you have obtained on colleges that interest you. Request any additional information
- Acquire information about application requirements, financial aid & academic programs for the colleges you are interested in
- Start investigating scholarships
- Think about which teachers you would like to write your recommendation letters (for applications, scholarships, etc.)
- Do some research about how to obtain financial aid <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>
- Create a resume – a record of your accomplishments, activities and work experiences since you started high school.
- Narrow your college list before the start of your senior year
 - Visit the website of each college and register/set up an account with username and password

Factors to Consider in Making Your College List:

- Location
- Size – the size of the campus, number of students enrolled
- Setting of campus – rural, suburban, urban
- Academics – majors, minors, Associate Degree (2 years), Bachelor's Degree (4 years), Master's Degree and more
- Learning environment – large or small class sizes, accessibility of professors
- Housing options – type and availability of dorms and other student housing
- Cost to attend



contact Me

Sarah Beth Drury • Counselor
Email: sdrury@southernacademy.net





Senior Year College Checklist

•FALL SEMESTER•

- Finalize your college list & visit each college website and read all requirements for admission
 - Make sure you have an online account to fill out applications for each college on your list
- Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - College application due dates
 - Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines (financial aid applications may be due before college applications)
 - Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
- Plan to visit prospective colleges and get a feel for the campuses
 - Research and register for preview days for the colleges you are interested in visiting
- Complete your resume
- Register for and take the ACT
 - Request ACT score to be sent to colleges of interest
- Fill out your college applications: the college application is how the admissions committee makes the acceptance decisions. Your application must represent you in the best way possible. Following directions and completing all sections make a difference (college admissions are very competitive).
 - Ask your counselor to send your transcript to the college(s) you apply to
- If you're submitting essays:
 - Make a list for all essay and short answer topics for each college application and brainstorm ideas
 - Then, write first drafts and ask teachers and others to proof read them. Essays can be a critical part of your application.
- Ask your teachers or counselor for recommendations if you need them. Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities and special achievements



contact Me

Sarah Beth Drury • Counselor
Email: sdrury@southernacademy.net





Senior Year College Checklist Continued...

•FALL semester•

- Retake the ACT (if needed)
- Continue to work on applications and essays
- Complete your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>
 - Gather financial documents
 - To apply for most financial aid, your child will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You'll need your most recent tax returns and an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA, which now opens on October 1st
- Complete all requests for recommendation letters and give all required information to the person/people who are writing them
- Double check that all transcripts and test scores have been sent to all colleges you have applied to
- Begin to check on scholarship information and deadlines
 - Check the Counselor's Corner page on the website and daily email for the most recent scholarships information that has been sent to your counselor

***WATCH APPLICATION DEADLINES!!**

REMINDERS:

- *Always print a copy of your completed application before you submit
- *Always double check each application before submitting
- *Always have at least one other person read your essays before you add it to the application



contact Me

Sarah Beth Drury • Counselor
Email: sdrury@southernacademy.net





Senior Year College Checklist Continued...

• SPRING SEMESTER •

- Be sure all applications are complete
- Check with teachers, counselor & colleges that all forms have been mailed and received
 - Check that the college has received financial aid information, test scores, applications and all other forms
- Watch application deadlines – it's not too late to apply to many colleges
- Pursue scholarship options. Watch due dates!
- Keep in touch with all colleges and check your email regularly
- Respond to all requests for additional information for your colleges

-
- Re-visit schools you have been accepted by and would like to attend
 - Once you've received all your responses from colleges make your final decision
 - Inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid
 - Continue to keep your grades up! Second semester counts too!
- ❖ Notify your counselor of where to send your final high school transcript once graduation is complete



CONTACT ME

Sarah Beth Drury • Counselor
Email: sdrury@southernacademy.net



Important College Dates

Auburn Univeristy

- Application Opens: August 15, 2018
- Scholarship Deadline: December 1, 2019
- Students must be accepted in order to fill out scholarship information and complete housing application
- Application Closes: January 15, 2019
- May 1, 2019: Confirmation deposit deadline and deadline to accept scholarships

Shelton State Community College

- Application Opens: October 18, 2018
- Scholarship Application Opens: January 1, 2019
- Scholarship Application Deadline: March 1, 2019
- Mercedes Mechatronics Program Deadline: March 31, 2019
- Summer 2019 Registration Begins: April 12, 2019
- Summer 2019 Classes Begin: May 28, 2019

University of Alabama

- Application Opens: July 1, 2018
- No application close date: rolling admission (you may apply up until the start of classes)
- Scholarship application close date: January 1, 2019
- Students must be admitted by December 15th in order to access the scholarship application
- Housing Priority Deadline: February 1, 2019
- Students must pay their Freshmen Enrollment Deposit of \$200 before being able to submit the Housing Application with a deposit of \$300, students who complete both by February 1st will be able to choose their housing
- Students find out about scholarship awards from the application in the middle of March, and their Financial Aid award at the end of March
- Deadline for Housing Applications: May 1, 2019
- Freshmen Enrollment Deposit: May 1 (Freshman Enrollment Deposit must be paid before you apply for housing)

University of West Alabama

- Application Opens: September 1, 2018
- Students may apply up until July 31, 2019
- Priority date to pay the confirmation fee is May 1, 2019 (but students may continue to pay into the summer)
- Orientation Registration Begins: February, 2019
- Scholarship Deadline: April 15, 2019
- Housing Priority Deadline: May 15, 2019

FAFSA OPENS OCTOBER 1

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>

Top Ten Ways to "Test Drive" a College

- 1. Learn about the college before you visit.** Read materials from the college and check out their web site. If you are visiting more than one on a particular day, refresh your memory about that school just before you arrive. Be sure to spend at least one-half day at each college.
- 2. Evaluate the environment of the campus.** Is the campus too big or too small for you? Do you like the nearby town or do you feel isolated? Consider how you would get around campus particularly in the rain or snow.
- 3. Visit the admissions office and participate in the information session.** Ask questions that help you clarify the academic program at the school and the type of student who is most comfortable and successful there. You may choose to have a formal interview with an admissions staff member. Bring a resume of your grades and activities. Dress nicely, but not out of character.
- 4. Take the student-led tour of campus.** Take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions about campus life from a peer. Recognize, however, that tour guides are not necessarily typical of all students since they formally represent the school.
- 5. Check out the dorms.** Find out about the dorm options available, such as all-Freshman or co-ed. Arrange in advance to spend the night in a dorm, if possible. Picture yourself living in a dorm. Are you comfortable with where they are located on campus, such as the proximity to classes or the campus center?
- 6. Arrange for campus meetings with department heads in the subjects that interest you, coaches in sports where you excel, and former graduates from your high school.** Bring a resume that highlights your experience in your area of expertise. Ask about opportunities based on your skills and interests. Write down the names of any officials you meet with and send personal thank-you notes when you return home.
- 7. Sit in on classes and check out the library.** How is the rapport between students and faculty in the classroom? Look through the books at the library in your area of interest. Look for quiet places to study.
- 8. Look into life beyond academics.** Check out the athletic facilities, theater, and student center. Read the notices up in the dorms or on bulletin boards. Can you see yourself joining in?
- 9. Have lunch in the student center and watch student interactions.** Talk with students all over campus about their impressions of the school. Look at the students themselves. Do you feel comfortable among the students?
- 10. After each visit, write down your impressions of that college.** After a while, the visions of different schools start to blur if you don't immediately stop to record your thoughts! Keep a list of pros and cons for comparison.

SOURCE: IECA website: www.educationalconsultanting.org

To Do's for High School Seniors Preparing for College

Ask teachers for recommendations as early as you can. Summer is a great time to do this, as most students ask in early fall or even early winter. It's important to give your teachers plenty of time to prepare for writing your recommendation. If they have a list of items needed in order to write a recommendation, like a transcript and resume, make sure to turn these in early.

Retake your SAT or ACT if you choose to. Not everyone is happy with their standardized testing score on the first try. If you'd like to improve your score from junior year, study over the summer and take the exam again in summer or early fall.

Get your college applications out of the way early. College applications can be stressful and demanding even when you're *not* also balancing school work. To help curb stress and put your best foot forward on your applications, it's smart to get most of your applications out of the way in late summer, after the applications are released. Even early fall is better than saving your applications for during midterm season!

Ask your counselor to submit your materials well before the deadline. Give your recommendation-writers enough time to write on your behalf. It's also always kind to follow-up with a thank you gift or note.

Remind your recommendation writers a few weeks before your deadlines. Teachers and counselors are busy people, and keeping track of everyone's differing due dates can be challenging. Help make it easier for them (and make sure nothing falls between the cracks) by sending them a reminder a few weeks before the deadline.

Keep an eye on application deadlines. Also make sure that you, yourself don't get forget when your deadlines are. It's always a smart idea to submit early, but if you can't, last-minute is always better than late.

Complete your scholarship applications. Again, earlier is better.

Fill out your FAFSA. Paying for college doesn't need to be impossible. There are lots of free online resources to help you fill out your financial aid forms; your parents and guidance counselor may be able to help you.

Visit the colleges you are accepted to. If and when you get accepted to college, make sure to visit the different schools you've been accepted to. Take a tour, sit in on a class, and talk with current students. You want to be as well-informed as possible when making a decision about the next four years of your life.

Review the financial aid packages you get with your family. While college may feel like a personal decision, if your parents are paying for your education, it's a family decision. Review your financial aid packages with your family and go over what your options are.

Notify your chosen school and submit the deposit before the deadline. Congratulations! You did it!

To Do's for Parents of High School Seniors

Help your child fill out the FAFSA. This will take a bit of time to figure out, so doing it together will help save time and stress. You can find plenty of free online resources to help you as you fill it out.

Help your child remember to submit their documents and applications before the deadline. Try as they might, most teenagers just aren't gifted with a great memory for due dates. Make sure you know when applications are due so you can keep your child on track.

Review the financial aid package of the college that your student chooses. It's important to be informed about the financial aid package you're being offered. If you need extra clarification, call the financial aid office at your child's college. You can also read up on what kind of loans or grants they are offering online. Do some digging and make sure you're aware of what you are getting into

Celebrate. Your child was accepted to college! You did it! Make sure to celebrate this achievement as a family, if you can. It's truly a moment worth reflecting on!