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# 4-year College Exploration, Application, and Planning Guideline

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Every student is a unique individual, and we approach the college exploration and application process here at The Gregory School with that attitude; there is no viewpoint that “one size fits all.” This four-year timeline should be used as a guideline, rather than a step-by-step checklist to be completed by all students. Please note that ninth grade focuses on setting the stage for academic success and sampling extracurricular interests. Tenth-twelfth grades emphasize a deepening of those practices and involvements and an increase in one’s individual post-high school planning. Through the partnership and encouragement of the TGS College Counseling Center, faculty, staff, and parents, each student will most certainly find success.

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# Freshman Year

## First Semester

- Enroll in appropriate and challenging courses. Explore interesting electives. Leave time for study hall (free block).
- Learn and practice solid academic and time management skills; freshman grades are the foundation of your upper school GPA.
- Develop problem-solving skills and learn to communicate with teachers. BE ENGAGED.
- Self-advocate for academic assistance with your teachers; Use Tutorial wisely.
- Enjoy being in high school. Attend sporting events, musical & theater events, school dances, and time with family & friends.
- Explore extracurricular clubs, activities, sports, and service opportunities.
- Register for and attend at least one college and career Friday Exploration.
- Register for and attend at least one college admissions rep visit.

## Second Semester/Summer

- Continue solid academic work. See how your academic record is taking shape.
- Register for your sophomore classes; see how they fit into your four-year plan. If appropriate, consider taking AP courses during your sophomore year.
- Develop a routine & plan of action that works for you: How will you stay organized and manage your time?
- Make the most of your summer. Consider participating in: a summer enrichment program or summer “pre-college” program; volunteer opportunities, or employment.
- Explore colleges online from time to time. Start thinking about what you might be seeking in a college experience. Make note of what catches your attention.
- Create a résumé noting your freshman year activities, involvements, honors, awards, etc.

Curriculum components color key

- = Academic
- = Executive Functions
- = Extracurricular
- = College & Career

# Sophomore Year

## First Semester

- Enroll in courses that are rigorous, challenging, & interesting. Branch out and try new electives.
- Maintain your academic success from freshman year, or develop an “improvement plan.”
- Set long- and short-term SMART goals for yourself: academic and personal.
- Use your problem-solving skills & advocate for academic assistance; start sophomore year STRONG.
- Try something new to expand your horizons or continue to enhance areas of specialization. Become an active member of a student organization, athletic team, or community program.
- Earn community service hours on a regular basis for an organization that reflects your personal or potential career interests.
- Continue to research colleges and careers through Friday Explorations.
- Learn how to navigate a college website.

## Second Semester/Summer

- Continue solid academic work. Use tools that enhance your success.
- Make careful choices for your junior year course selections. Register for Junior College Seminar.
- Consider AP, advanced, and dual enrollment courses as are appropriate for your academic preparedness and interest in the subject matter.
- Revisit your goals and adjust as necessary.
- Use your problem-solving skills, self-advocacy, & time management skills—and make sure you are communicating with your teachers & using Tutorial to your benefit.
- Take the Pre-ACT & PSAT 10, which are automatically scheduled for the TGS sophomore class.
- Research summer enrichment or pre-college programs. Find community service opportunities that align with your personal or career interests. Seek out summer employment.
- Enhance your college exploration by attending college fairs, online admissions sessions, & open houses.
- Update your résumé to reflect your sophomore year activities, involvements, honors, awards, etc.

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# Junior Year

## First Semester

- Make certain that your course selections reflect your post-high school goals: Is the rigor appropriate? Are the classes expanding your interests or strengthening your specialization?
- Enhance—not just maintain—your level of academic success.
- Set long and short term SMART goals for yourself: academic and personal.
- Demonstrate leadership within your extracurricular activities.
- Earn community service hours on a regular basis.
- Connect with our regional college admissions representatives to start building relationships.
- Begin developing your list of potential colleges, based on academic preparedness, personal fit, affordability, etc.
- Tour college campuses in person or online.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT, scheduled for all TGS juniors.
- Attend the Junior College Preview & the Financial Aid and Scholarship Information Night.

## Second Semester

- Continue to work on your academic success.
- Enroll in the Junior College Seminar course as your schedule allows.
- Revisit your goals and adjust as necessary.
- Use your problem-solving skills, self-advocacy, & time management skills—and make sure you are communicating with your teachers and using Tutorial to your benefit.
- Attend a summer enrichment/pre-college program, seek part-time employment, or create your own extracurricular opportunities.
- Attend the Junior/Parent College Launch.
- Register and prepare for ACT/SAT testing; get a baseline score; have the scores sent to you—not to colleges.
- Create your list of colleges and designate them as “reach,” “target,” or “likely.”
- Review & discuss Early Action & Early Decision application options.
- Register for the NCAA Eligibility Center if you’re considering playing a DI or DII collegiate sport. Inform your college counselor if you are being recruited.
- Use the Net Price Calculator to determine an estimate of college costs.
- Attend required meetings for your Senior Internship; begin internship hours if prepared and approved.
- Take AP and final exams.
- Develop a campus visit action plan for the summer.
- Update your résumé to reflect your junior year activities, involvements, honors, awards, etc.

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# Senior Year

## First Semester

All TGS seniors are enrolled in the Senior College Seminar course, which is taught by the college counselor and meets twice a week during the first semester. All topics and tasks below are included in the course syllabus and are worked on during that dedicated course time and through one-on-one appointments.

- Engage fully in your courses which are appropriately rigorous and intentional.
- Examine your academic record/transcript: What story does it tell about you as a learner? Do your senior year course selections round out that narrative?
- Record your application and scholarship deadlines; work backwards and map out appropriate amounts of time per week that will be dedicated to that work.
- Be mindful of the due dates for Senior Internship: work on earning your hours.
- Demonstrate leadership in your extracurricular activities, music, sports, community service, and other involvements.
- Attend the Senior/Parent Launch and the Financial Aid & Scholarship Information Night.
- Complete your applications, working in order of ED/EA and RD dates.
- Complete the FAFSA and CSS/Profile soon after the October 1 launch.
- Update your SCOIR account regularly.
- Consult weekly with your college counselor regarding your progress of applications, questions and/or concerns.
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers, community members, and/or employers.
- Maintain those relationships with college admissions reps: interview, attend TGS visits, tour campuses.
- Put final touches on your college essays and résumé.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT, if necessary.
- Apply for honors and scholarship programs.

## Second Semester

- Maintain your strong academic record.
- Take AP and final exams.
- Write thank-you notes to people who wrote letters of recommendation for you.
- Keep track of all deposit and refund deadlines.
- Determine your level of interest in waitlist/deferred decisions.
- Submit applications with January and February deadlines.
- Consider offers of acceptance and financial aid/scholarship awards.
- Check your email and college portals regularly.
- **MAY 1: National College Deadline Day: submit your deposits for enrollment and housing. Inform other colleges you are not attending.**
- Complete your senior internship final portfolio and internship presentation.
- Graduate! Celebrate with family and friends.
- Attend your college orientation: take placement tests and register for classes.
- Be ready to make new friends & establish a new community away from home!

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