

ESTIMATED TIME SCHEDULE FOR ENTRANCE EXAMS,  
COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, AND FINANCIAL AID

**SENIOR YEAR**

2017-2018

**SEPTEMBER**

- SAT test date is October 7; registration due by September 8.
- ACT registration for the October 28 test date is due September 22.
- College representatives begin to meet with students in the Guidance Office.
- Time to be exploring colleges, setting up visits to colleges, receiving application materials.
- Students interested in MSU, U of M, and GVSU should get started on their applications this month.
- Counselors begin meeting with seniors to discuss future plans and complete credit checks.
- Students read the Student Bulletin for scholarship opportunities.
- Monday, September 18, at Cornerstone University, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. This is the Christian College Fair and only Christian colleges will be represented.
- Tuesday, September 19: Financial Aid Workshop/Senior Parent College Night – Parents will receive helpful advice on filling out the FAFSA and information on the college application process.
- Students hoping to play a sport in a Division I or II school should go to [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) and get registered. See your counselor for more information.

**OCTOBER**

- SAT registration for the November 4 test date is due October 5.
- College Fair Thursday, October 5, at Hope College, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- SAT test date is October 7.
- Thursday, October 24, at Aquinas College, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- ACT test date is October 28.
- Sign up to meet with college representatives at school.
- Applications are submitted to colleges.
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) becomes available online. You will receive numerous reminders from the financial aid offices of the colleges you have applied to. The FAFSA must be filled out online.
- Teachers' Convention is a great time to visit colleges, October 19 and 20.

## NOVEMBER

- ACT registration for the December 9 test date is November 3. This is the last test date to qualify for the Michigan Competitive Scholarship.
- SAT test date is November 4.
- Students should know which colleges they are applying to, and get their applications sent out.
- Plan college visits.
- Continue to visit with college representatives in the Guidance Office.

## DECEMBER

- SAT test date is December 2.
- ACT test date is December 9.
- All college applications should be sent out by Christmas vacation. It is the student's responsibility to know application deadlines for colleges they are interested in.
- **December 31 is the application deadline for scholarship consideration for GVSU. All information must be to GVSU by this date. THE COLLEGE IS CLOSED BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS.**

## JANUARY - MAY

- For some colleges, January 31 is the absolute last date they will accept an application for a student.
- Some colleges have a February 1 application deadline for scholarship consideration.
- By this time, most students will know which colleges they have been accepted to. Some colleges, usually the most difficult ones to get into, have late notification dates. Students usually know their status for all colleges by May 1.
- Financial Aid packages are sent out to students. Parents, along with their students, begin to compare financial aid packages to see which schools are affordable. A final school selection is then made. In most cases, this must occur by May 1.
- Many local scholarships become available during this time. Students hear of these opportunities by way of the Student Bulletin.
- Students should inform all colleges they have been admitted to of their decision to attend or not.

# CHOOSING A COLLEGE

## How do I know which is best for me?

There are many factors to take into consideration when choosing a college. Some of these include:

1. Location
2. Size
3. Do I want a dorm experience?
4. Christian/Private, Public
5. Climate
6. Cost
7. Can I get in?
8. Majors/flexibility to change
9. Student life

College websites are the best resource for researching all of the above.

Remember, you can apply to as many colleges as you want. You have until May 1 to make a final decision.

At this point in the process, don't let the cost of a certain college keep you from applying. You can make a decision about affordability after you receive the financial package from the school.

# VISITING COLLEGES

Would you buy a car without ever driving it or a new house without ever walking into it? The same is true of a college. You are ready to invest four years of your life and spend a lot of money. You need to check out each school you're interested in.

## How to set up a college visit:

- Start by calling the college you want to visit or checking on the college's website. You want to make sure the date works for them. Some colleges have specific dates for visitations. These are the best dates to go because the college is set up for your visit. Your counselor can call for you, but we have found that the schools prefer talking to the students directly.
- Make sure your visit includes a meeting with an admissions counselor. This is especially important for the more selective schools.
- Ask about financial aid. What is the average financial aid package?
- If you have an idea of a field of study, ask to meet with a professor in this area. Also, ask to sit in on a class in your interest area. These two things usually need to be arranged at the time you set up your visit.
- If you are interested in the possibility of graduate school, you will want to ask how many students from a particular department apply to graduate school, and how many actually get in. For example, if you're thinking you might want a PhD or PsyD in Psychology but the college you are thinking of doesn't get many students into graduate programs, you probably want to give a serious look at some other colleges.
- Make sure you get a full tour of the campus.
- If possible, stay overnight in the dorms. If you plan to live on campus, you want to make sure you're in an environment where you feel comfortable.
- Ask about college life and social activities such as clubs you can become involved in.

# FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

## Kinds of Aid:

Most kinds of aid are either merit-based or need-based. Some also require residency, occupational choice, and a variety of application procedures.

1. Gift Aid
  - a. Scholarships which represent non-repayable money that is usually based only on academic performance. They may have financial need factor.
  - b. Grants which represent non-repayable money that is based on demonstrable need.
2. Self-Help Aid
  - a. Loans which must be paid back after leaving school. Evidence of financial need is usually required.
  - b. Employment through part-time work during the school year and full-time work during vacation periods.

## Financial Aid Time Line:

1. Go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and apply for a FSA ID FOR BOTH STUDENT AND PARENT.
2. You must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online for all federal, state, and most college-based financial aid. Some colleges require a form in addition to the FAFSA (FAF, FFS, or their own supplement) to evaluate financial need. (See each college's website for their individual requirements.) The FAFSA website is [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
3. The processing agent calculates your financial need and sends this information to the colleges and agencies you have requested.

## A few notes about financial aid

- Don't eliminate a college at the beginning of the college search just because of the cost. The final price tag varies for each individual and for each college. Financial aid "packages" are sent to students in April and final college decisions are usually requested by May 1.
- This window of time gives students a chance to compare colleges and cost before making a final decision.
- Don't spend all your time searching for private scholarships. Private scholarships represent only one percent of the financial aid pie. Use your time wisely by exploring the entire financial aid pie in order to receive the maximum financial aid award. Act as your own personal college scholarship search service.
- The Michigan Competitive Scholarship is awarded to students who show need and receive a 1200 on the SAT. Families must complete the FAFSA to be eligible for this scholarship.

# Helpful Scholarship Websites

[www.kaplanpracticetest.com](http://www.kaplanpracticetest.com) – Practice tests for SAT and ACT

[www.testprep.com/satmenu-college](http://www.testprep.com/satmenu-college) Test Preparation: Webware SAT Skills

[www.schoolsintheUSA.com](http://www.schoolsintheUSA.com) – U.S. Educational programs

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) – Helping you navigate the financial aid process, apply online, college research

[www.collegequest.com](http://www.collegequest.com) – College search, financial aid

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) – Students can link to sites that offer information on such topics as scholarship searches, how to calculate on estimate family contribution, educational loans and loan counseling, scholarships and grants, tuition payment plans, how to avoid scholarship search scams, and much more.

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) – A free scholarship search service. It offers a database to more than 180,000 private scholarships, fellowships, grants, and loans. It is available free to students through the Financial Aid Information Page.

[www.mi-studentaid.org](http://www.mi-studentaid.org) – A Michigan search comprehensive scholarship service including Michigan specific scholarship information.

[www.careerprep.com](http://www.careerprep.com) – Career outlook summary of news and employment trends from “The Career Choices Newsletter.”

[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com) – Lets you find colleges by course of study, religious affiliations, diversity, athletics, and services for disabled.

[www.peterson.com](http://www.peterson.com) – Educational and career choices.

[www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com) – Free scholarship and career choices.

[www.ed.gov-US](http://www.ed.gov-US) – Department of Education

[www.treasury.state.mi.us](http://www.treasury.state.mi.us) – Michigan Department of Education

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org) – American College Testing Corporation

[www.fafsa.ed.gov/money/html](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/money/html) - Student Guide and Funding your Education

[www.c3apply.org](http://www.c3apply.org) – College search, financial aid, and application info.

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com) – College search for higher education

[www.campustours.org](http://www.campustours.org) – Campus Tours: Virtual College Tours

[www.college-scholarships.com](http://www.college-scholarships.com) – 2001 colleges, college scholarships, and financial aid.

[www.findtuition.com](http://www.findtuition.com)

[www.christianconnector.com](http://www.christianconnector.com) – Christian college links including admissions, fin. aid and scholarships

[www.myscholly.com](http://www.myscholly.com)

# The Common Application

Many colleges now accept the Common Application for admission. This is an application you fill out online and then send to all colleges you are interested in applying to. You will find out if a college requires the Common Application through their website; they will have a link to it. In the area, Hope College only takes the Common Application. Calvin takes their own or the Common Application, while Grand Valley, Cornerstone, Aquinas, Bakker, GRCC, and Davenport do not accept it. Here are some things about the Common Application to keep in mind.

1. It is a lot of work. It will take time to complete. The Common Application has an essay you will have to write, plus each college you apply to will have supplement questions, which are additional essay questions.
2. On all applications, including the Common Application, be very specific about your extra-curricular activities. These activities are often taken into consideration when awarding scholarships.
3. The Common Application includes recommendations from your counselor and teacher or teachers. These are very time consuming forms. Make sure you ask your teachers if they are willing to be one of your recommenders before listing them. You will invite them to be a recommender by including their school email address. Do not put Unity's general email address, but the teacher or counselor's email address (list of teacher/counselor email addresses is attached). Putting the wrong email address will mess up your application. After you fill out the recommender's section, make sure you ask the teacher in the next few days if they received the request.
4. You will need to include a lot of information about your parents' education; probably answers you will not know. Make sure you give yourself enough time to fill this section in properly.
5. The Common Application will not be sent to the colleges you are applying to until it is filled out properly and all recommendation forms are submitted.
6. Near the end of the application, you will be asked if you want to waive your rights to see what your teacher(s) or counselor have written about you. Although this is your decision, colleges usually take the opinion that they are receiving a more honest response when the rights are waived.

## Unity Christian High School Faculty Email List as of 9/11/2017 FOR SENIOR STUDENTS AND COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

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## ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE AFTER GRADUATION FROM UCHS

If you are not planning on attending college right after high school, you have many options for employment. Some of you will continue in jobs you have now while others will be ready to start a new job experience. With the very low unemployment rates we are now experiencing, you will most likely be concerned with, “Which job is best for me?” versus “Will I get a job?” Some employment opportunities provide excellent on-the-job training, which gives you valuable new skills for future career direction. Here are some things to think about when considering a full-time job:

- Evaluate yourself, your abilities, your likes and dislikes. For example, can you see yourself doing the same thing each day, or do you need some variety? Do you prefer working indoors or outdoors? Do you need flexibility during the day to be able to move around? Do you like working with numbers, people, or things?
- Use your senior year to explore various employers. See Mrs. Vanderwell if you would like to arrange a tour with a prospective employer. Many employers are eager to show you what they have to offer.
- Look for a job that can offer you benefits, such as health insurance.
- Job possibilities will be posted as we receive them.
- Be sure and see your counselor if you have any questions concerning the best way to present yourself in an interview or building a resume. We can give you suggestions.

## OTHER OPTIONS

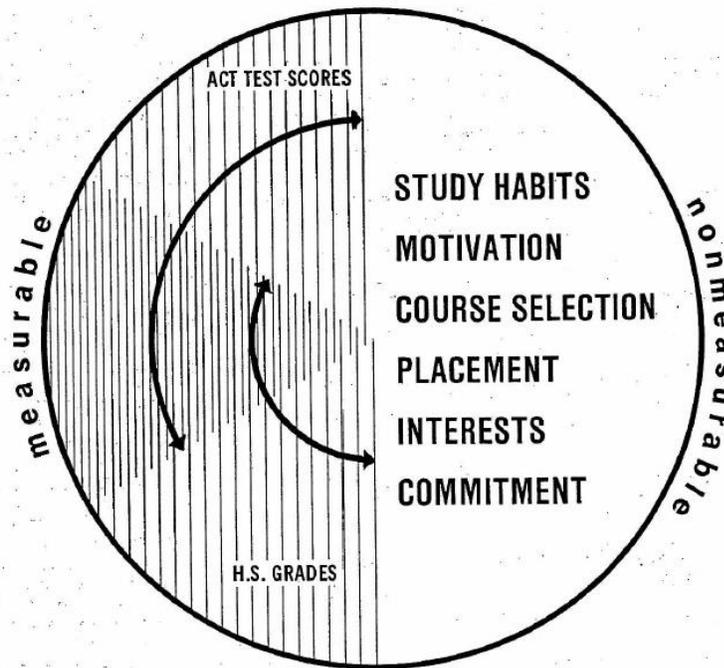
- Military – The Armed Services is one of the major employers in the nation. It is also a major source of educational training and preparation for entry-level jobs. There are numerous job-training opportunities in the military for both men and women. Representatives from all the services are available to give you information about career training and/or educational opportunities. You are strongly encouraged to review with your counselor what information the recruiter covers with you. Also, it is important that you not sign any documents or take the ASVAB test until you have talked with your counselor.
- Vocational Schools – It may be that you are not looking for a traditional college experience, but you may choose further schooling to learn a specific skill. For example, there are schools which specialize in auto mechanics or diesel mechanics. Another example would be cosmetology. If a vocational school is a possibility for you, it’s a good idea to go ahead and take the ACT.
- Apprenticeship – Some students go to work out of high school where they will learn on the job a specific trade. Examples here are electricians and plumbers. For both these occupations, an employer takes you on as an apprentice. Some evening classes, usually

at the community college, will be necessary. In most cases, your employer will take care of all your educational expenses. Eventually, you will be required to take a state test to be licensed in your area. In most apprenticeships, you will be asked to commit to a specific number of years. This is a common practice, being that your employer will have invested a lot of time and money into you.

## College Success Factors

Test scores and high school grades are important...

...However, they measure only part of your "potential"



*Keep in mind...making sound decisions will lead to satisfying and successful experiences!*

**ACT**