



Foundation for Ensuring Access and Equity

College Planning Cohort™ Program

P.O. Box 70457 | Marietta, GA 30007

(678) 395-5825 | FAX (770) 587-0862

www.accessandequity.org | cpc@collegeplanningcohort.com

Syllabus: 2019/20 High School Senior Curriculum

The 2019/20 High School Senior Classroom is designed to provide comprehensive guidance from finalizing college and scholarship research, to creating a college application plan, to reviewing financial aid award letters. Students who work through each of the modules should greatly expand their understanding of college and scholarship options, and should developed a well researched group of colleges and scholarships to which they are well matched.

Modules

The online curriculum is currently comprised of 18 modules. However, the college admissions and scholarship processes are continually changing, so too, is our curriculum. As we become aware of pertinent information, such as The University of Chicago becoming 'test optional,' modules may be added, adjusted, or deleted entirely.

Modules are sequenced in a manner as to best guide students toward critical decision points, i.e., identifying the team needed to ensure that students submit 'high quality' application packages (Module 2), matching colleges to career aspirations (Module 4), identifying the best college programs (Module 5), finalizing their college list (Module 7), identifying institutional scholarships (Module 8), and developing a college application plan (Module 9).

While high school seniors are under pressure to quickly get to "Module 9 - College Application Plan" (as some scholarship deadlines are in September), a comprehensive college application plan can only be arrived at by completing the modules through which students research careers, college majors, colleges, and scholarships. Through our monthly newsletters, we will provide guidance in the recommended modules to be completed during each month. Unlike our 9 - 11 online classrooms, in which only 2 - 4 units are assigned per month, seniors, particularly those who did not participate in our program from grades 9 - 11, may be required to complete a great more work if they are to stay on track with an aggressive senior-year college-planning timeline.

Instructions

The first unit in each module is the instructional unit, outlining the objectives, required materials, required reading, and guiding questions. The guiding questions are intended to serve a twofold purpose:

1. Guide student learning. Completing the lessons should enable students to answer the guiding questions.
2. Guide student-parent conversations. Our program is based on the belief that college planning is a team effort. The 'team' begins at home between students and parents, but may also be supported by counselors, college advisers, coaches, and cohort facilitators. The guiding questions may be used to guide conversations between students, between student and mentors, or between students and cohort facilitators.

Lessons

Lessons guide students through the college planning process and are designed to provide the pieces of each student's overall college-bound plan. Each lesson consists of one or more of the following components:

- Videos
- Guided Research
- Required Actions
- Narrative Writing
- Discussion Topics
- Links to pertinent articles, websites, and resources
- Links to colleges and scholarship programs pertinent to the lesson
- Student Profiles
- Examples pertinent to the unit, such as sample résumés, student profiles, award letters, and scholarship awards

Documents

As a Google Partner in Education, we utilize the secure Google Docs platform to create, exchange, and monitor student work via narrative documents and forms. This student created body of work is a key component of our program. While our curriculum guides students through the college planning process, students must 'Own the Process.' The value of the process is revealed in how students respond to the guiding questions, how students apply what they are learning to developing a well-matched group of colleges and scholarships, and ultimately how much student loan debt is minimized, or avoided entirely, as a result of student efforts in developing high quality application packages that are presented to the 'right' colleges and submitted for the 'right' scholarships.

New Student Registration

All participating students must complete 3 New Student Registration activities listed on the [New Student page of our website](#). After successfully completing these activities, students will be issued login credentials to our website.

Module 1: FAFSA4caster

Provides an example of how selective schools, such as Princeton and Yale, meet the financial need of families based on a student's EFC. Provides a link to the US Department Education FAFSA4caster website to computer your estimated EFC, as to guide your college research.

Guiding Question: As you begin the college planning process, what is your family's EFC?

Module 2: Welcome Survey and Navigating the Classroom

Provides video interviews with parents and students regarding the college planning process, cohort participation, and their pathways into 2-year and 4-year institutions; welcome survey; guidance in setting up a Google Account devoted to college planning; setting up and sharing documents; developing an email signature; signing up for the newsletter; and identifying your team.

Guiding Questions: How will I 'own the process' so that I control my destiny and success in this program? Who are the teachers who can speak to my brand or hook in a recommendation? How will I equip my counselor to evaluate me using my brand or hook? Who will assist me in developing my résumé, editing my essays, and proofreading my college applications? Who will assist me with

completing the FAFSA and CSS Profile? Who will ensure that I do not miss important emails from colleges?

Module 3: College Admissions

Provides an overview of the college admissions process through video interviews with college admissions officers; guidance in developing a senior-year course schedule within a college admissions context; guidance in setting academic goals; overview of special-focus résumés (i.e., performing arts, music, athletics, leadership); guidance in 'unpacking' your résumé,

Guiding Questions: What are the major milestones in the college admissions process? What is my 7-year middle-through-high school college-bound plan to maximize my college admissions and financial aid opportunities? How will I maximize my 2 million minutes of high school? How will participating in the cohort assist me in formulating my strategic plan?

Module 4: Setting Your Course

Provides guidance in developing a 4-year high school schedule or classes, test prep, and summer planning. A Posse Scholar shares her experiences at Boston University; guidance in completing an Interest Profile; guidance in researching careers; guidance in matching careers to colleges; provides narrative summary to be used in responding to writing prompts and scholarship applications.

Guiding Questions: According to the Common Data of my top college choices: What level and type of classes are expected?; What should be reflected on my résumé in the areas of academic achievement, community service, leadership, and awards?

Module 5: Careers and College Majors

A Posse Scholar shares her experiences at Boston University; guidance in completing an Interest Profile; guidance in researching careers; guidance in matching careers to colleges; provides narrative summary to be used in responding to writing prompts and scholarship applications.

Guiding Questions: What careers are associated with my gifts, talents, and aspirations? How do my course rigor, grades, and test scores match my top colleges' common data set? How do I identify the best majors for my career? How do I identify the best colleges for my major? What are the future job prospects associated with my career choice and what is the long-term earning potential?

Module 6: Researching Colleges and Programs

Provides an overview of pathways after high school; guidance in researching the broad range of 2-year and 4-year college options; examples of students attending the types of colleges being researched; how to market yourself based on your gifts and talents; how to utilize Diversity Weekend opportunities to increase college admission chances.

Guiding Questions: What type of colleges, such as large institutions, liberal arts, highly competitive, special focus schools, community colleges, or technical schools would I consider attending? Where can I research information about the colleges on my list and identify similar types of colleges?

Module 7: Finalizing My College List

Provides video testimonials of a student rejected from 4 of 5 colleges, Amherst College's acknowledgement of students who are well-matched, and admitted student, and her mother, share their cohort journey to Amherst College; guidance through research to determine your college match; guidance in completing the Net Price Calculator; comparing college costs; developing a well-matched final college list.

Guiding Questions: How does my student profile compare to the profiles of students admitted to the colleges on my preliminary college list? What colleges do my grades and test scores make me a strong candidate for being offered admission?

Module 8: Institutional Scholarship Research

Provides an overview of the impact of institutional scholarships on paying college costs; guidance in researching institutional scholarships matched to your profile; identifying institutional scholarship deadlines at the schools on your final college list; QuestBridge; Gates Scholarship; Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship; and Stamps Scholarship.

Guiding Questions: How do my top colleges and universities fit my financial needs? How do my top colleges and universities fit my academic and demographic profile?

Module 9: College Application Plan

Provides an example of the distribution of a college's freshman class; guidance in raising ACT scores; finalizing College Costs Comparison Sheets; choosing admission cycles; determining how to

submit applications; and setting up required college application accounts (e.g., Common Application, Coalition Application, etc.); and noting college application and scholarship deadlines.

Guiding Questions: Have I identified the method through which I will submit each of my college applications (e.g., Common Application, college’s website, by mail)? How am I aligning my essay, recommendation letters, resume, and application supplements with those ‘very important’ categories in the common data set?

Module 10: Letters of Recommendation

Provides an interview with an admissions officer describing the importance of recommendation letters and what colleges are looking for; guidance in identifying the right people; how to request recommendations; and sample recommendation letters.

Guiding Questions: Who are the teachers, coaches, counselors, or supervisors I can rely upon to write letters of recommendation that align with my brand, hook, or personal statement? What are some of the key elements to be highlighted in a well written recommendation letter?

Module 11: My Story

Provides a video of Damian Lee’s story; sample essays; how students in communities, such as the ‘Corridor of Shame,’ should work their background into their essay; how to focus an answer to the question, ‘Why College;’ examples of students who have a story based on their passions; guidance through the essay writing process.

Guiding Question: What are the life experiences that provide the context for telling my story?

Module 12: Essays and Writing Responses

Provides a video interview with a student who discusses ‘strategic writing;’ supplemental reading on writing great essays; strategies for tailoring essays to the mission of specific colleges and programs; sample essays; choosing a Common Application topic; choosing an approach; reviewing your profile; non-cognitive variables; and engaging in an effective review process.

Guiding Questions: What type of college admissions essay will most effectively tell my story, provide insight into my dreams and aspirations, or why I am the right match for the college to which I am applying for admission? What are the life experiences that may provide a context for my essay or writing responses?

Module 13: Completing the FAFSA

Provides an overview of the FAFSA process; common mistakes to avoid; US Department of Education infographics; determining dependency status; guidance in creating a FSA ID; completing the FAFSA; what to expect after the FAFSA is processed; ordering IRS Transcripts; what to do if your FAFSA is 'Selected for Verification.'

Guiding Questions: If you are a male student seeking federal student aid, are you registered with the selective service system? Will you be applying for financial aid as a dependent or independent student? Are you aware of the typical documents that will be requested if you are 'Selected for Verification?' How will you know if your FAFSA has been successfully processed?

Module 14: Completing the CSS Profile

Provides a video of the process for completing the CSS Profile; and how to complete the profile on the College Board's website.

Guiding Questions: How does the federal government determine the amount of federal aid for which you qualify? How do private colleges determine the amount of institutional aid for which you qualify?

Module 15: Financial Aid

Provides guidance in applying for financial aid; applying for NCAA Clearinghouse for athletes; and the importance of monitoring emails and responding to document requests; estimating costs; understanding how outside scholarships are handled; merit- versus need-based aid; .

Guiding Questions: What must I do to be considered for the maximum amount of financial aid at each of my colleges? What is the financial aid policy for each of my colleges in handling outside scholarships? How much of my scholarships and grants are one-time versus those that are renewable? What opportunities will there be to earn scholarships, or to reduce my costs, as an admitted student? What are the type of colleges from which I am most likely to receive 'no loans' financial aid packages? What must I do to ensure that I do not miss important requests for documents needed to finalize my financial aid award?

Module 16: What to Do After Receiving an Admission Decision

Provides guidance in comparing college costs based on financial aid award letters; accessing online portals; responding to document requests; reviewing financial aid awards; and withdrawing applications for Early Decision admission offers.

Guiding Questions: When must I make a final admission decision? What institutional scholarships have I been offered? Has my financial aid award been finalized? Did I qualify for any federal or state scholarships and grants? Are there any actions I must take to finalize my enrollment decision? Who should I note on the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA) form, as authorized to speak with financial aid on my behalf?

Module 17: Understanding Award Letters

Provides sample award letters; dispels the myth that in-state colleges cost less; provides guidance in how to compare award letters; finalizing College Costs Comparison Sheets; estimating your Net Costs; and appealing financial aid awards.

Guiding Questions: Do I have to accept Work-Study and student loans? If my EFC = 0 does that mean that it will not cost me anything to attend college? If I am awarded an institutional scholarship, will I receive the same amount of money for each year of college? Which financial aid award letters best meet my family's financial need?

Module 18: Applying for Scholarships

Provides guidance in understanding scholarship requirements; gaining insight into the scholarship provider; getting organized and tracking your submissions; focusing your scholarship research; essay writing strategies; understanding how outside scholarships will be applied; scholarship search engines versus Internet search engines; identifying your 'intangibles;' non-cognitive variables; and creating 'winning' scholarship packages.

Guiding Questions: Based on my *Student Profile*, on what types of scholarships should I focus my research efforts? How should I organize myself to streamline the scholarship application process? What are the type of merit-based scholarships for which I am a competitive candidate? What are the colleges, universities, or programs, offering merit-based scholarships aligned with my areas of merit?

Additional Modules

As was indicated in the Overview, additional modules may be added based on student needs, changes in college admissions policies, or in response to scholarship opportunities.

Confidentiality

We are committed to the confidentiality of student records. We are a Google Partner in Education and utilize the secure Google platform for the exchange of documents. Also, your participation in our program grants us, or our community partners, permission to take photographs at meetings and to profile student outcomes on our website in the manner in which students are currently profiled on our website.

How to Begin

New students, whether they are registering through our website, or through one of our community partners, should go to the following page on our website and complete the required steps to finalize their registration: <https://www.accessandequity.org/new-students/>

Emails from our online classroom are automatically directed to the email address provided in the student registration. After the student registration has been finalized, all of our email correspondence will be directed to the email address of the registered student. The reason that we require that emails to this email address be automatically forwarded to parents is to ensure that parents are always aware of our communication with students, including our monthly College Planning Cohort Newsletter.

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Disclaimer

We make no guarantees regarding a student's college or scholarship outcomes. Our program utilizes the latest in research, conversations with college admissions officers, and our own experiences to provide students with a deeper understanding of the college admissions and financial aid processes in a manner as to assist students in expanding their college and scholarship opportunities. Please review our [**Terms and Conditions**](#).