

# POUDRE HIGH SCHOOL POST SECONDARY PLANNING GUIDE

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# POST SECONDARY PLANNING GUIDE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Sophomore Year Checklist.....   | p. 1     |
| Junior Year Timeline .....  | p. 2     |
| Senior Year Timeline .....  | p. 3     |
| College Application Roles & Responsibilities .....  | p. 4-8   |
| Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR)<br>Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Admissions Standards..... | p. 9     |
| Web Resources for the College Bound.....  | p. 10    |
| Sampling of College Guides.....   | p. 11    |
| Community and Junior College Information .....  | p. 12    |
| Making the Most of a College Visit.....   | p. 13    |
| Questions to Ask During Campus Interviews.....  | p. 14    |
| Campus Interviews.....  | p. 15    |
| Post Campus Visit Comparison Grid .....   | p. 16    |
| Recommendation Worksheet .....  | p. 17-18 |
| High School to Career Information.....  | p.19-20  |

# SOPHOMORE YEAR PLANNING

The long-range planning focus for sophomores will increase self-awareness through the Critical Skills Course. A successful sophomore year is an important foundation for planning for success in your junior and senior years.

- College-bound students should take the PLAN (pre-ACT) test in October.
- Athletes considering collegiate athletics must notify their counselor in order to make appropriate course selections for the NCAA Clearinghouse requirements.
- Critical Skills Course Work:
  - ✓ Career Research on computer databases
  - ✓ Interest Inventory
  - ✓ Personality Indicator
  - ✓ Aptitude Assessments
  - ✓ Values Assessments
  - ✓ Learning Styles
  - ✓ Portfolio Created
  - ✓ Five Year Plans
    - College, Vocational School, Military, Work?
    - Selection of courses to support five year plan

# JUNIOR YEAR TIMELINE

| <u>September October</u>  | <u>January February</u>  | <u>May June July August</u>  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>College bound juniors take the PSAT in October</p> <p>See PACE Coordinator about a Capstone experience</p> <p>Begin College Search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Research careers and Post secondary options at <a href="http://www.bridges.com">www.bridges.com</a> password: poudre site id: 0104852</li> <li>✓ Attend College fairs</li> <li>✓ Attend College information meetings in PHS college and career center</li> <li>✓ Meet with military recruiters</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>November December</u></b></p> <p>Schedule appointment with Counselor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Confirm 2<sup>nd</sup> semester course selections</li> <li>✓ Check progress toward graduation requirements</li> <li>✓ Request interest inventories</li> <li>✓ Request personality indicators</li> <li>✓ Review test and assessment results</li> </ul> <p>Explore and review career interests</p> <p>Shadow in your Potential career field</p> | <p>Register for Senior year courses</p> <p>Register for SAT see guidance bulletin for deadlines</p> <p>Update your resume</p> <p><b>Register for SAT II (subject tests) if your institution requires or recommends them</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>March April</u></b></p> <p>ACT will be administered at PHS for all juniors in April</p> <p>Potential collegiate athletes are required to register for the NCAA clearinghouse at <a href="http://NCAA.ORG">NCAA.ORG</a></p> <p>Seek summer employment related to potential career field</p> <p><b>Request materials from post secondary institutions</b></p> | <p>Continue researching post secondary institutions</p> <p>Contact post secondary institutions to arrange summer visits, tours, and interviews.</p> <p>Review Which College is Best for Me and complete College Comparison Grid (page )</p> <p>Update resume</p> <p>Decide if you plan to apply early action or early decision</p> <p>Begin Application Essay</p> <p>Login and register to your Naviance account monthly</p> |

# SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b><u>September October</u></b></p> <p>Login and check Naviance</p> <p>Complete and submit legal name form to registrar.</p> <p>Submit senior picture and quote to publications lab</p> <p>Schedule senior conference with your counselor; parents are encouraged to attend</p> <p>Attend College information meetings in college and career center</p> <p>Pick up and read guidance bulletin every two weeks</p> <p>Order cap and gown</p> <p>Visit post secondary institutions to which you will apply</p> <p>Register for College Opportunity Fund <a href="https://cof.college-assist.org/cofapp/cofapp/">https://cof.college-assist.org/cofapp/cofapp/</a></p> <p>Register to retake SAT and/or ACT (first tests in fall!)</p> <p>Register to take SAT II if necessary</p> <p>Request two – three letters of recommendation, with at least one from a CORE academic teacher</p> <p>Narrow your post secondary choices to no more than six.</p> | <p>Begin college application process. Electronic application is encouraged (notify counselor)</p> <p>Attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Out of state college fair at PHS</li> <li>✓ In state college fair</li> <li>✓ At RMHS</li> <li>✓ Financial Aid Night at FCHS</li> <li>✓ Vocational and career fair at FRHS</li> </ul> <p>Complete application essay</p> <p>If planning to apply <b>early decision or early action</b> complete application <b>at least two weeks prior to deadline</b> and submit to your counselor</p> <p><b><u>November December</u></b></p> <p>Login and check Naviance</p> <p>Complete all post secondary applications and submit to counselor at least two weeks prior to winter break</p> <p>Check course work, credits and graduation status with your counselor</p> <p>Register for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) PIN number on line at <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a></p> | <p><b><u>January February</u></b></p> <p>Login and check Naviance</p> <p>Complete Federal student aid on FAFSA website</p> <p>Begin scholarship search see guidance bulletin and <a href="http://fastweb.com">fastweb.com</a></p> <p>Register for Advanced Placement exams</p> <p>Continue to earn good grades! Your acceptance is conditional until successful completion of high school</p> <p>Contact your counselor regarding submitting mid year reports</p> <p>Begin community college applications</p> <p><b><u>March April May</u></b></p> <p>Login and check Naviance</p> <p>Revisit or visit the post secondary institution you plan to attend</p> <p>Return letter of intent to post secondary institutions</p> <p>Submit housing information</p> <p>Request final transcripts be sent to post secondary institution where you will be matriculating (Immunization information will be included)</p> <p><b>CONGRATULATIONS!!</b></p> |
|--|--|---|

# COLLEGE APPLICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At Poudre High School we see the college search and selection process as a three-way partnership between the counselor, the student, and the parent. Quite on purpose, we place the student in middle of the partnership, because every action taken in this process focuses on the student. You are the most important piece of the admission puzzle: your parents and your counselor should always put the responsibility for every decision back on your shoulders, where it belongs. While it may sound scary to have such a large amount of responsibility, remember that your parents and counselor are caring adults who will offer you assistance along the way.

Your counselor will perform the following college counseling duties for you:

## 1. *Advisement on College Choices*

The College Search Grid -Your counselor can be helpful in assisting you to target schools based upon the characteristics that you identify as being most significant. The grid is found in this booklet. Your counselor may offer some additional suggestions to round out your criteria.

Through the Bridges software program, students identify those college characteristics most important to them and perform a wide range of functions related to researching colleges and careers. Primary features include: interest inventory linking career to identified interests, personal portfolio, and vocational/technical school exploration.

Within reach - If asked, your counselor can help you narrow down your search list to have a more manageable researching task. We encourage you to apply to at least one school where you have a highly probable chance of being admitted. Some students may wish to include one or two schools that may be considered "reach" schools. Applying to more than six colleges can become burdensome with regard to writing essays, meeting different deadlines at each school, and paying some hefty application fees.

## 2. *Coordinate the admission process*

Your counselor is the coordinator of your application, transcript, and secondary school report/recommendation. It is imperative for your success to schedule your senior meeting with your counselor in September or October.

## 3. *Process your applications*

## 4. *Write a letter of recommendation*

If required for college applications, counselors write letters of recommendation for their students. Each letter requires a minimum of one hour of preparation prior to writing. Counselors consult with teachers, examine your testing records, and curricular pattern, and reflect upon contacts with you. The *Counselor Recommendation Worksheet* is required to assist him/her in crafting your recommendation.

## 5. *Advocate the student's best interests*

The counselor is your advocate in the process. Should you need assistance, should an error be made, should there be a misunderstanding, should a college not treat your application in an ethical or professional manner your counselor is the right person to intervene on your behalf. If we feel that you may be applying to a college where your chances of admission are very slim, it is our obligation to advise you - and that's not easy! Should a college inadvertently misread your transcript, it is our obligation to contact the admission office to settle the misunderstanding. Your counselor cannot serve as your advocate if he or she doesn't know when a problem is occurring. Consult with your counselor regarding any questions or concerns about your applications.

# The Student's Role and Responsibilities

The responsibility for the entire college search and selection process falls upon your shoulders, the student. While you can count on the support of your parents and counselor, you must be the one to engage in the decision making process. And the reason for this is simple: YOU are the one going to college! Only you can determine what, in the end, is best. Here is a list of your major responsibilities:

## 1. *Meet with your Counselor for Suggestions, Assistance and Naviance account information*

One of the first steps in your process is simple: contact your counselor. Discuss your plans, ask questions about the process, and share your concerns. Remember that your counselor is your advocate during the application process. However it is hard to advocate for a student who hasn't made an effort to be known by his or her counselor. It is imperative to register on your Naviance account! See page 7 for instructions and check it often. Make time for this!

## 2. *Narrow Your College Choices*

Counselors can offer you assistance as you narrow your choices but in the end, it is your decision to apply to college! We encourage students to file three to five college applications. Applying to only one school is risky business and may indicate that you've ended your search prematurely. On the other hand, applying to more than six schools may mean that you haven't narrowed your search far enough. Avoiding this phase of decision-making only adds pressure.

## 3. *Procure Applications*

It is your responsibility to obtain applications, however the most efficient application process is done online. Today, most colleges expect students to obtain applications at the college's website and either apply online or download a hard copy. The number of paper applications sent to high schools has significantly decreased. If you prefer to have a paper application, make certain that you allow approximately three weeks after you contact the college for the application to arrive in the mail. Hint: Use the Common Application if you are applying to several private colleges and universities. One application is all you may need! Notify your counselor if you applied **online**, as he/she may need to complete other forms for you to complete your application process.

## 4. *Complete Applications*

This is your job! We know how busy your senior year can be, but you must take time to complete the paper work. Mom and Dad cannot (and should not) complete applications for you! Make time for this! This is your application to college, not your parents'. We encourage you to construct a reasonable calendar of college application activities (when to write the essays, when to mail, etc.), so you won't run out of time. Don't forget to sign your application before you turn it over to your counselor for processing.

### Application processing:

- ❖ Plan for ten full business days from counselor's receipt of *completed* applications (all essays completed, check included, etc.) for submission of application materials to colleges. Save all of your writing samples and essays on disk. Always photocopy your applications prior to forwarding them to your counselor.

- ❖ Personally place college applications into the hands of your assigned counselor. If necessary, make an appointment to personally deliver college applications, communicate special requests, or to touch base before applications are processed. Provide your counselor with: *Application Cover Sheet* (online apps too), *Counselor Recommendation Worksheet*, and your resume. There is a \$2.00-\$3.00 processing fee for each college application/official transcript.
- ❖ Applications for admission that are to be received by colleges prior to January 15th must be given to your counselor the Friday after Thanksgiving.
- ❖ If a teacher recommendation is required for the college application, the completed *Teacher Recommendation Worksheet* must be provided to the faculty member with your updated resume. Students are *required* to allow faculty members twenty business days to compose letters of recommendation. Please *do not request a faculty letter of recommendation unless it is a required piece of the admission application.*
- ❖ Students applying either Early Action or Early Decision must make teacher letter of recommendation requests prior to OCTOBER 15<sup>th</sup>. Attach the completed *Teacher Recommendation Worksheet* and your updated resume.
- ❖ Applying to colleges electronically (online)? Great! Don't forget to submit the *Application Cover Sheet* to your counselor so a transcript is sent. Our telepathy isn't too reliable. If required, make certain that you provide your counselor with the secondary school report counselor form. Review "*Applying for Admission Online*" in your College Application Book.
- ❖ Mid year reports (7th semester grades) are submitted *if* requested by the student. Please submit the request to Mrs. Kelly Mapes in the guidance department.

## 5. Complete all Necessary Standardized Tests Required for Admission

This information is found in four places: many guide books, The College Application Book, and college websites. Be sure that you are aware of each institutions admission testing requirement.

## 6. Meet all Poudre High School and College Deadlines

- ❖ **Deadlines exist for a reason - they are not optional!** Plan on ten full business days for your applications to be processed (the clock begins ticking when your completed application is in the hands of your counselor). Make certain you inform your counselor if you plan to apply *Early Decision* or *Early Action* to colleges. If you are applying to four-year colleges or universities, your applications should be into your counselor well before winter break. All applications you wish to have mailed prior to winter break must be in your counselor's hands by the first Friday after Thanksgiving break.

# FAMILY CONNECTION BY NAVIANCE

Dear PHS Students and Families,

The Guidance Counselors at Poudre High School are pleased to introduce *Family Connection* from *Naviance*, a web-based service designed especially for students and parents. *Family Connection* is a comprehensive website that you can use to help in making decisions about high school courses, colleges, and careers. *Family Connection* is linked with *Counselors' Office*, a service that we use to track and analyze data about college and career plans, so it provides up-to-date information that's specific to you.

*Family Connection* will allow you to:

- Perform scholarship searches by researching a comprehensive list of available scholarships
- Get involved in the planning and advising process – build a resume, complete on-line surveys, prepare for high school course registration, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers
- Research colleges – compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from students who have applied and been admitted in the past
- Sign up for college visits – find out which colleges are visiting PHS and sign up to attend those sessions

How Counselors will ask you to use *Family Connection*:

- Since this will be one of the primary ways your counselor will communicate with you regarding post-secondary planning and registration for classes, it is important to check your PHS email account at least once each week. You will be receiving frequent email announcements with important information and requests! *If you cannot access to your school email account, see someone in the Media Center immediately to enable your email access!*
- You will be REQUIRED to complete important surveys that will assist us in helping you with high school course registration, college applications, and your plans for after high school.

To get to *Family Connection* go to: <http://connection.naviance.com/poudre>

**VERY IMPORTANT: DO NOT CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT!**

Instead, enter the following in the *RETURNING USER* area:

- ***Username:*** This is your student ID number
- ***Password:*** This is your PIV pin number.

If you need your student ID number and/or PIV pin number, please see your assigned counselor.

We hope that you will find this resource helpful. If you have further questions about Family Connection, please contact your assigned counselor.

# The Parent's Role and Responsibilities

The last group in this college admission partnership are your parents. Your parent's role begins to shift from decision-maker to decision-supporter. Below are some tips, which might make the parental role in the process easier and more comfortable. Parents need to be responsible for:

## *1. Providing Encouragement and Support*

The choice of a college and career is clearly the most stressful part of high school for many high school students. All of the decisions, which need to be accomplished, can be overwhelming, confusing, and even frightening to both parent and child. Students need all the encouragement and support parents can muster.

## *2. Assisting Your Student to Meet Deadlines*

Gentle (and some not-so-gentle) reminders from parent and counselor will be needed if each senior is going to meet application deadlines. Remember, it is not the adults' responsibility to meet the deadline; it is the student's. Every nudge will be much appreciated though!

## *3. Determining Ability to Pay for College*

The best way to get started is to attend the fall Financial Aid Night in October at Fort Collins High School. Whether you want to or not, it is the parent's primary responsibility to pay for college. Filling out the required financial aid forms is a parental task. Since students have a vested interest, they should become acquainted with the process of paying for college. Paying for college is a hefty investment. At the front end of the search process discuss with your student what you can afford and the financial parameters that are in place. This will help your student target appropriate college choices. Generally, financial aid and scholarship notification begins in March of the senior year. Completing an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculator will assist you in getting a "ball park" idea of need eligibility.

## *4. Accompanying Your Student on the Preliminary Visit to College*

Parents are encouraged to accompany their student for the initial campus visit. Parents have a vested interest in this process. It is your right to carefully study this investment. While your student is meeting with an admission officer, why not meet with a financial aid officer to familiarize yourself with their deadlines, programs and payment plans? As you tour the college or university, ask yourself one question: "Can I see my child fitting in here?" Why or why not? **And try to remember: this will be your child's home for four years, not yours. Keep the needs and personality of your child foremost in mind.**

## *5. Contacting Counselor for Additional Information*

Call your student's counselor at any point for a quick question, clarification of a procedure, or for an appointment to discuss things further. Please don't wait for your student's counselor to contact you.

## *6. Allowing Your Child to Grow to Independence*

This is the hardest part of the parenting job at this point in time: helping your child to help himself/herself. This requires a great deal of patience. The first steps toward independence can be shaky, faltering, and even threatening. Parents become more the supporter and mentor. Your child will have to learn to be without you when he/she enters school. Making senior year a trial run at independence will help your child - and you! Tip: find ways to encourage their independence at home, i.e., cooking, laundry, scheduling, budget.

The partnership is effective only when partners communicate openly with each other. All three parties involved - counselor, student and parent - need to know their roles and accept responsibility for their tasks. Together, this important partnership can make the college search and selection process less stressful and more productive.

# HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS (HEAR) COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CCHE) ADMISSIONS STANDARDS

| Subject Areas*                            | Phase I (2008)  | Phase II (2010)                           |
|---|---|---|
| English**                                 | 4 Units   | 4 Units                                   |
| Math***                                   | 3 Units (Algebra I, II and<br>Geometry or Equivalent) | 4 Units                                   |
| Natural Science***                        | 3 Units (2 Units Lab-based)                           | 3 Units (2 Units Lab-based)               |
| Social Studies***                         | 3 Units (1 Unit U.S. or<br>World History)             | 3 Units (1 Unit U.S. or<br>World History) |
| Foreign/World Language (In Same Language) | ---   | 1 Unit                                    |
| Academic Electives****                    | 2 Units   | 2 Units                                   |

\*\*Two units of ESL English may count for HEAR requirements when combined with two units of successfully completed college preparatory English.

\*\*\*College-preparatory ESL mathematics/science courses that include content and academic rigor/level comparable to other acceptable courses may satisfy HEAR requirements.

\*\*\*\*Acceptable Academic Electives include additional courses in English, mathematics, natural/physical sciences and social sciences, foreign languages, art, music, journalism, drama, computer science, honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate courses, and appropriate CTE courses.

# WEB RESOURCES FOR THE COLLEGE BOUND

## **Interests, Careers, and College Majors:**

Occupational Outlook Handbook online:  
[www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco)  
What to Do With Majors:  
[www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/majors.htm](http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/majors.htm)

## **College Search Sites:**

National Association for College Admission Counseling  
Parent/Student Info: [www.nacac.com/p&s.html](http://www.nacac.com/p&s.html)  
College Board Online: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)  
ACT-College Planning & ACT Test Registration:  
[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)  
My College Guide: [www.mycollegeguide.org](http://www.mycollegeguide.org)  
All About College: Links: [www.allaboutcollege.com](http://www.allaboutcollege.com)  
Campus Tours: [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com)  
The Admissions Office: [www.theadmissionsoffice.com](http://www.theadmissionsoffice.com)  
College 411: Links [www.college411.org](http://www.college411.org)  
Online College Fair: [www.onlinecollegefair.com](http://www.onlinecollegefair.com)  
US News: [www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/home.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/home.htm)  
Princeton Review: [www.review.com](http://www.review.com)  
College Express: [www.collegeexpress.com](http://www.collegeexpress.com)  
Peterson's: [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)  
College View: [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)  
EMBARK.COM: [www.embark.com](http://www.embark.com)

## **Online College Applications:**

Common Application: [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) (Great way to apply)  
COLLEGENET: [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)  
XAP.COM: [www.xap.com](http://www.xap.com)

## **Scholarships Searches:**

EXPANScholarship Search:  
[www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/ssrchttop.html](http://www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/ssrchttop.html)  
FASTWEB: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)  
[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

## **Scholarship information, search tool**

### **Scholarship Scams:**

[www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml)  
Wired Scholar: [www.wiredscholar.com](http://www.wiredscholar.com)

**National College Fairs:** [www.nacac.com/fairs/html](http://www.nacac.com/fairs/html)

## **Resources for the Student Athlete:**

National Collegiate Athletic Association: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)  
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics:  
[www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)  
College Recruiting: [www.collegerecruiting.com](http://www.collegerecruiting.com)  
LevelEdge: [www.leveledge.com](http://www.leveledge.com)

**Study Abroad:** [www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)

## **Enrichment and Service Programs:**

Corporation for National Service: [www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov)  
Where There Be Dragons: [wheretherebedragons.com](http://wheretherebedragons.com)

**Selective Service Registration:** [www.sss.gov/whhh.htm](http://www.sss.gov/whhh.htm)

## **Multicultural Resources:**

Black Collegian: [www.black-collegian.com/](http://www.black-collegian.com/)  
Black Excel: The College Help Network:  
[www.BlackExcel.org](http://www.BlackExcel.org)  
Department of Education/Office of Bilingual Education  
and Minority Languages and Affairs:  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA)  
Gates Millennium Scholars Fund: [www.gmsp.org](http://www.gmsp.org)  
Hillel: Jewish Campus Life: [www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org)  
Hispanic Scholarship Fund: [www.hsf.net](http://www.hsf.net)  
Historically Black Colleges and Universities:  
[www.smart.netl-pope/hbcu/hbculist.htm](http://www.smart.netl-pope/hbcu/hbculist.htm)  
Minority Scholarships and Fellowships:  
[www.sciencewise.com/molis](http://www.sciencewise.com/molis)

**Resources for Students With Disabilities:** American  
Association of University Affiliated Programs for  
Persons with Developmental Disabilities:

[www.avcd.org](http://www.avcd.org)  
National Attention Deficit Disorder Association:  
[www.add.org](http://www.add.org)  
National Center for Learning Disabilities: [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)

## **Financial Aid Resources:**

National Association of Student Financial Aid  
Administrators: [www.nasfaa.org](http://www.nasfaa.org)  
National Direct Student Loan Coalition:  
[www.siue.edu/directloan](http://www.siue.edu/directloan)  
Student Financial Aid Resources by States:  
[www.ed.gov/programs/easistate.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/easistate.html)  
FAFSA on the web: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)  
The Financial Aid Information Page: [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
Expected Family Contribution Calculator:  
[www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml)

## **College Entrance Test Info and Test Prep Resources:**

Kaplan Test Prep: [www.kaplan.com](http://www.kaplan.com)  
The Princeton Review Test Prep: [www.review.com](http://www.review.com)  
Test of English as a Foreign Language: [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org)  
Number 2 (Free test prep): [www.number2.com](http://www.number2.com)

# **SAMPLING OF COLLEGE GUIDES**

College Board College Handbook  
(The College Board)

Peterson's Guides to Four Year Colleges  
(Peterson's)

You're Gonna Love This College Guide  
(Barron's Educational Series)

Colleges That Change Lives  
(Penguin USA)

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges  
(St. Martin's Press)

The Fiske Guide to Colleges  
(Sourcebooks)

The Best 331 Colleges  
(Princeton Review)

Discounts and Deals at the Nation's 360 Best Colleges  
(Western Publishing)

College Money Handbook  
(Peterson's)

Scholarships, Grants and Prizes  
(Peterson's)

How to Go to College Almost for Free  
(Waggle Dancer Books)

The Student Athlete's Guide to College  
(Princeton Review)

The Daystar Guide to Colleges for African American Students  
(Kaplan Books)

The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorder  
(Princeton Review)

Barron's Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges

# COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE INFORMATION

Community and Junior colleges offer a variety of programs, degrees, and course work that are often more affordable than the typical four year institution. Fortunately, Colorado, as well as other states, has many options. Each of these schools has an open admission policy, which means after you have earned a high school diploma you are able to enroll in higher education coursework. Depending on your area of study, the program that you are applying to may be more academically rigorous to gain admission.

Some community and junior colleges have housing options, so that students may choose to live on campus in residence halls, similar to four year institutions.

When exploring junior or community college as an option, the same search process applies, however the application process generally begins in January or February of the senior year.

Bridges, The Princeton Review, and the College in Colorado websites are all helpful when searching for community college options.

The following list of Colorado community and junior colleges will help you begin your search process.

Aims Community College  
Arapahoe Community College  
Colorado Northwestern Community College  
Community College of Aurora  
Community College of Denver  
Front Range Community College  
Lamar Community College  
Morgan Community College  
Northeastern Junior College  
Otero Junior College  
Pikes Peak Community college  
Pueblo Community College  
Red Rocks Community College  
Trinidad State Junior College

## MAKING THE MOST OF A COLLEGE VISIT

It is difficult to truly know if you've found the best school for you if you have not visited. Students visit campuses to determine if there is a "fit" between themselves and the colleges they are considering. College viewbooks, websites or virtual tours are no substitute for actually visiting the campuses. Plan to include your parents in this important phase of your search process. On campus you will see where you would live, study, sleep, eat, and socialize. Remember that if you live on a college campus, it is a full-time arrangement. The academic part might be a great fit yet other aspects of living on campus may not be right for you. You are a whole person so choosing the best match involves a broad range of considerations in addition to academic program.

Many colleges are in session when students at Poudre are on break. These days are perfect for visiting campuses. Plan to spend time during your junior and senior year making your visits. The summer break is also helpful for getting a basic feel for campuses. Keep in mind that summer on most campuses is not reflective of what it is really like during the academic year. Would a visiting student get a feel for the "real" Poudre if they came to visit in July? -Probably not.

If you are considering colleges far away from home and won't find out about your admission decisions until late March or April of your senior year, you will probably need to utilize spring break to visit those colleges before making your final decision. Avoid getting caught without enough time to complete one of the most important steps of the college search process. Poudre juniors and seniors are allowed two days (excused absence) each year to visit colleges. Check with the attendance office for procedures to follow to use these days.

A good visit takes some preparation and planning. The following guidelines may be helpful.

Some other tips to contemplate:

1. Phone or contact via e-mail the admission office well in advance of the visit, so the office may plan accordingly for your interests during your visit.
2. If possible, the student visitor should inform the college of his/her special areas of interest when seeking an appointment, such as major, athletics, music, theatre, etc
3. Learn as much as possible about the college before you visit through guides, college literature, and the internet.
4. Bring a camera or video recorder to capture each campus and its facilities.
5. Prepare a brief "resume" of information about yourself. It is recommended that you take an unofficial transcript, pertinent test data, and your 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> semester schedule.
6. The visit and interview will determine the personal impression made on the admission officer and your potential match to the college or university. Be yourself.
7. Plan to spend the day at each college. Try to sit in on a class, browse in the library, talk to students in addition to the tour guides, and read copies of the school newspaper.
8. Immediately following your visit record all of your impressions on the *Post Campus Visit Comparison Grid*.
9. Write notes of appreciation to individuals who helped you during the visit.
10. Return the completed absence form and official verification letter to the attendance office.

*Students should prepare a list of questions in advance of their visit that reflect the criteria most important to them. The following list can be utilized as a starting place.*

# QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING A CAMPUS VISIT OR COLLEGE INTERVIEW

- What is unique about this college? What is it about the college that makes students want to attend? What kinds of students are happiest here?
- How many matriculating freshmen successfully complete the first year? How many return as sophomores? How many eventually graduate from the same institution? In four years? In five or six years?
- What is the main reason that students leave the college without graduating?
- What are considered to be the strongest academic departments? What are the most popular majors?
- How does the Honor System (if any) work? What is the penalty for cheating?
- Is there a sameness within the student body? Does the school attract or appeal to a particular type of student?
- Does the college have a reputation as a party school, academic drudge school, caring community? What percentage of the students stays on campus on most weekends? Where do the rest go? Is it a "suitcase" college?
- How would the interviewer describe the atmosphere/personality of the campus? Of the surrounding community? What is the relationship between the campus and community? Is the campus like a walled fortress? Do the students and "townies" get along well?
- If the admission officer or alumnus was an applicant this year, what would be his/her reasons for choosing this college? What would be its disadvantages?
- To what extent are students interested and involved in social, political, and cultural issues and activities? What are the college's criteria for hiring, promoting, and firing faculty?
- How does the college feel about the write-ups it receives in subjective college guides? In national magazines? In other media?
- Who teaches freshmen? Who teaches undergraduate upperclassmen? How many courses are taught by graduate assistants? Is my professor likely to know my name? How available is the faculty outside the classroom? Is there any social contact between students and faculty? Is it formal or informal?
- Is housing guaranteed for any upperclassmen who desire it? What alternatives are available?
- What are the immediate post-graduation plans of most undergraduates?
- What are the opportunities for independent study? For self-designed majors? For the waiver of core requirements?
- What types of research are being carried on by faculty? Are any students involved in these research projects?
- How many students are involved in off-campus or foreign study?
- How difficult is it to transfer from one major to another or to re-design a major that is already in progress? How often is this done? How late in one's career is it still possible to do it?
- How important a role do fraternities and sororities play in the life of the Students? What social activities are available outside the fraternity system? How easy is it to join?

# CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

The following are questions typically asked by interviewers. They have all been used at some time or other in the evaluation of prospective students. Forewarned is forearmed, but if you get an off-the-wall question, or even a perfectly sensible one, which you cannot answer or do not understand, say so. Do not guess, shrug, stammer, improvise, embellish, prevaricate, invent, fudge, fabricate, fantasize, lie, or change the subject. Ask to have the question clarified or admit that you don't know the answer.

- What do you want to get out of your college experience? What do you hope to major in? Why?
- What is the most important thing you have learned in high school?
- What are your personal (or academic) strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you have any heroes, contemporary or historical? If you could talk with any person, living or dead, who would you choose? Why?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school or community?
- What have you liked or disliked most about your high school? What would you change? Why? How?
- What sort of people do you like, admire, enjoy the most? What people have had the greatest influence on you? In what way(s)?
- What led you to decide to include this college among your choices? What makes you think that this college and you are right for each other?
- To what other colleges are you applying? Why? Which is your first choice? Why?
- What adjectives would you choose to describe yourself? How would your friends describe you? How would your teachers describe you?
- How do you spend a typical afternoon after school? Evening? Weekend? Vacation?
- What newspapers, magazines, non-required books do you read? What television shows do you watch? What's the best movie you have seen recently?
- What are your current social, political, cultural interests?
- What are your educational goals and plans for the future? What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?
- What events have been crucial in your life?
- What historical event do you feel has had the greatest impact on the 20th century?
- How do you feel about a nuclear freeze; uses of nuclear energy; the use of drugs and alcohol; gun control; abortion; euthanasia?
- Tell us about your family.
- What hobbies, special projects and extracurricular activities do you devote the most time to? Which do you find most satisfying? Why?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
ID# \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Counselor \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Recommendation Worksheet

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Letters of recommendation are extremely important for scholarships and college admission decisions. In order to be effective and useful, please write your answers to the following questions after careful thought using depth and detail. Please include your updated resume for me to use as reference. This is only to be completed if you need me to write a letter of recommendation for you.

What is the topic of your college essay? Why?

What are your academic goals?

What are your career goals (or areas of vocational interest)?

Which college is your first choice? Why?

How will you "fit" at the college(s)/university(ies) you have chosen?

What have you done to learn about the college/university to which you are applying for admission?

What are your personal strengths? Please give examples, include hobbies, athletics, clubs, your personality, volunteer work, service etc..

What is your biggest area of weakness and how have you worked on overcoming it?

What areas would you like me to focus on in your letter of recommendation?

Have you done anything this past summer to prepare yourself for the future? What and why was it significant to you?

Give examples that describe your:

Capacity for intellectual growth, academic potential curiosity Initiative, self-motivation, responsibility  
Leadership potential  
Originality and creativity  
Special talents

I have shown my leadership talents by:

The accomplishment I am most proud of is:

Are there any extenuating circumstances that I should be aware of (hardships, personal obstacles), if so please explain them?

Qualities you like best about yourself are:

Qualities teachers like best about you are:

Qualities friends like best about you are:

Write about a significant experience you have had.

**Remember the more depth and detail you use the better your counselor will be able to represent you to the higher education institution of your choice.**

# HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER INFORMATION

From 10th to 12th grades, students should take as many opportunities as possible in the following areas:

**Apprenticeships:** There are over 850 apprentice occupations. See your PaCE Director to find out if the career area you are interested in fits one of these occupations. Apprenticeships generally begin upon graduation and run from two to four years in length. You earn pay while working full time and attend a related class once a week in the evening. Upon completion of your program you are fully certified in that occupation.

**On-the-Job Training:** Opportunities exist in almost any career area for gaining experience in the field of your choice. This career option allows you to be in an environment associated with your career choice, earn pay, and gain hands on training.

**Internships:** Endless opportunities to gain experience in an environment of your choice; most often these are non-paid. Get involved in projects for the business/company and gain experience and training. Internships vary in length from one month to one year.

**Shadow Experience:** Find out if the career you are interested in pursuing is what you picture it to be. Spend from two hours to a full day within a company or business related to your career choice. Contact individuals within the business directly to make a request.

**Capstone Experience:** Available to students who wish to create and complete a community based career-oriented project. Demonstrate your knowledge and skills through designing a project and working with a community mentor. Earn credit and Capstone Experience on your transcript. This also allows you to work towards earning an Endorsement in one of the Pathways.

## Interviewing Tips for Students:

**Always** go directly to the business in person whenever possible. (Avoid calling on the phone).

**Always** go alone!

**Always** go dressed up - you never have a second chance to make a first impression! (Dress up even if you are just picking up applications).

**Always** go prepared: take a pen, your résumé, and completed application.

**Always** go about ten minutes early to the interview.

## **Occupational Outlook through 2008....**

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the workplace will demand higher skilled workers.

20% will require a bachelor degree or post-graduate degree

15% will be unskilled, and

65% will require more than a high school education, but less than a 4-year degree

**In Colorado, if you do not have education beyond high school, you will earn 50% less than those who have one to three years of training or education.**

## How To Complete Employment Applications

- ✓ Read the entire application before you begin to write.
- ✓ Use dark blue or black ball point pen and always print.
- ✓ Fill in every blank, and if a question does not apply, write N/A (not applicable).
- ✓ Spell correctly and do not use abbreviations.
- ✓ When the application asks for acceptable salary or wages, use either “minimum wage” or “negotiable” if not sure.
- ✓ If you have been fired from a job, write “will discuss in interview” after the question that states REASON FOR LEAVING.
- ✓ Review your application after you complete it to make sure you have answered every question.
- ✓ Do some research on the company before you interview so that you know something about the product or service as well as how people dress.

## Plan Your Answers To Such Questions As:

- ✓ Why do you want to work for this company?
- ✓ What skills can you offer to this position?
- ✓ Do you have reliable transportation? Can I depend on you to be on time and here each day?
- ✓ What are your greatest strength and your greatest weakness?
- ✓ What jobs have you liked most?
- ✓ What jobs have you liked least?

## Ask Yourself These Questions:

- ✓ Do I want to work here?
- ✓ What would a day on this job be like?
- ✓ Can I get here without hassle?
- ✓ Are the pay and the hours of work right for me?
- ✓ Can I do it?

## Plan For The Job Interview

- ✓ Ask the employer ahead of time what to bring to the interview.
- ✓ Think of questions that you could ask the employer at the end of the interview:
  - ✓ Is there any training or educational opportunities in your company?
  - ✓ What kind of dress code does your company have?
  - ✓ Can you describe the next step in the hiring process?
  - ✓ Can you describe the benefits that the company offers?

**Wear clothes that are appropriate for the job. Arrive at least 10 minutes early for the interview. Avoid nervous gestures such as tapping, fidgeting, or swinging your legs. Beware of your body language. Look at the interviewer, lean forward slightly and look interested and alert. When the interview ends, be sure to shake the interviewer’s hand and say, “Thank you.” Ask the interviewer when you can expect to hear from him or her regarding the job.**

**Follow up with the interviewer. Write a handwritten thank you note and mail it to the interviewer. If you have not heard from the employer or interviewer after the appropriate length of time, call to ask the status of your application.**

**If you are not hired, be sure to ask the employer if he/she can refer you to someone else who is hiring, or if he/she will consider you for future job openings.**

### Remember:

Job hunting can be an exciting learning experience; a lot of good information on future career possibilities can come out of this process. You can also learn how companies operate and do business. Above all, don’t get discouraged; a positive attitude, youthful energy and showing a willingness to work is all in your favor!