

# **THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

## **SENIOR YEAR**

GETTING IT DONE!

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Senior year marks both an ending and a new beginning for high school students. College acceptance and high school graduation are the culmination of four years well spent. For many students, the last four years were a bit of a whirlwind! Seniors should make a habit of visiting their counselor particularly as they apply to college and after decisions have been made.

As freshmen learned to navigate their way around the SI campus, seniors must begin the process of transitioning out of SI. Generally, this begins with college applications quite early in the fall semester of senior year. Key skills in the successful navigation of the college application process are decision making and personal responsibility. We encourage students to own their college application process as completely as possible with the ongoing guidance of the counseling department and the support and encouragement of their parents.

The role of the counselor at SI is to assist seniors in making the application process more manageable. It is important for all seniors to get in the habit of asking their counselor questions as they arise, to discuss final college lists, application timelines, application requirements, whether or not to apply Early Decision or Early Action, and to give input into their counselor recommendation. Most importantly, counselors are available to listen and to be present at a time of change and uncertainty.

During the earliest part of the senior year, students should be finalizing the list of schools they want to apply to.

Please Note: Every college on a student's list should be somewhere the student would be happy to attend!

The college application is a multi-layered portfolio of a student's career at St. Ignatius as well as achievements outside of SI during the high school years. A good application tells the college admission office about the student's accomplishments, interests, and aspirations for their future. Most college applications will demand that a student spend considerable time honing their college application essay in an effort to accurately reflect who they are. Students will also use several supporting documents to present themselves: an official SI transcript, teacher and counselor recommendations, and, in most cases, standardized testing scores. Each piece of the college application stands on its own and should be considered with care and attention.

Senior year is an exciting time in the life of a young adult. Beyond college applications, our students are hopefully enjoying the company of one another and are continuing to pursue their interests in and out of school. They still have many experiences to look forward to such as senior retreat, prom, graduation, and time with friends and family. Maintaining balance in a senior's life is difficult but absolutely worth the effort on a daily basis. Students may sometimes find themselves struggling emotionally to understand how to navigate their eventual transition from home and away from loved ones. We hope that seniors take advantage of the resources available to them and reach out to family members, friends, teachers and counselors when they need support during their last year at St. Ignatius. In just a couple of months, seniors will have much to be proud of and to celebrate.

### **Suggestions for Parents:**

- As much as possible, take the student's lead. Senior year is a significant opportunity to encourage independence and positive decision making.
- Continue to offer support.
  - o For an academically successful student, encourage what works.
  - o For a struggling student, discuss necessary steps to find success in a particular subject/s.
- Watch out for 'senioritis.' If grades begin to slip, talk to your child as soon as possible. Listen and offer constructive feedback. Contact her/his counselor if there are concerns.
- Keep the regularly scheduled appointment to discuss college with your child. Now is the time to offer administrative/organizational support to complete college applications. It is essential that each Senior take the lead on his/her application process and gentle support/encouragement is key.
- Before the final college list has been completed, make sure that a variety of colleges are represented. This means ensuring a well rounded college application list by selecting colleges which fall under the following categories: 'Challenging, Possible and Likely'. See the College Section of this handbook for more information about creating a college list as suggested.
- Familiarize yourself with the procedures/requirements for each of the college applications on your .

### **Tips for Seniors:**

- Be Healthy. Eat well, exercise regularly and sleep every night. Monitor your stress level. Talk about it if you need to—as often as you need to.
- See your counselor as often as you need for anything. The college application process will go more smoothly if communication with your counselor happens regularly.
- Read the directions! This applies to college applications, tests, homework and just about anything else.
  - o Familiarize yourself with the requirements for each of the college applications on your list. Make note of the application materials for every school and keep your list in an accessible place.
- Stay organized and utilize time management skills. See your counselor for help if you need it.
  - o Create a system of organization for your college application/acceptance information.
- Remember, once you've been admitted to colleges, you'll continue to receive information about topics such as housing and financial aid.
  - o Keep everything you receive from colleges you're applying to: online and through the mail.
  - o Stay on top of deadlines – complete all application paperwork in advance of the due date.
- Senioritis: Don't let it happen to you!  
If it does, talk about it with someone and get help to get back on track. Colleges do see your second semester grades. After graduation, the final high school transcript is sent to the college of attendance...and yes, colleges do look at the grades! If grades slip, colleges may rescind their offer of acceptance.
- Memorize your social security number and the SI school code (053010).
- Use your Family Connection account. Counselors and Teachers use it to submit their recommendations and it can help you stay organized throughout the college process.

Seniors should get in the habit of reading the announcements every day for college related information. Family Connection is an essential part of this process as well. Make it a habit of logging on regularly for updates from the counseling department. Remember: keep your college list updated on Family Connection and keep your counselor informed of any changes!

### **Fall Semester 'To Do' List & Timeline**

Use the 'Academic Checklist' in the Appendix of this guide to help stay organized or as a guideline to create your own.

#### **College Applications: Getting Started**

- Make an appointment with your counselor to talk about college.
- Finalize your College List. Add this list to Family Connection.
- Read all applications thoroughly before filling them out.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Follow the directions in the 'Nuts and Bolts' section of this guide.
- Early Action/Early Decision candidates must have requests for recommendations to their Teachers/Counselors by October 5th, 2009.

#### **Essays:**

- Plan ahead. Write more than one draft of each essay.
- Attend the UC Personal Statement workshops presented by counselors/English faculty at SI. Dates will be announced in September.
- Have someone do a final read on each college essay. An English teacher and/or your counselor are good recommendations.

#### **Transcripts:** [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com)

- Seniors are responsible for ordering and sending their own transcripts to their perspective colleges.
- Order transcripts **online** by logging onto [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com). There is no fee to send a transcript online; your tuition (student fees) include this service.

#### **Financial Aid/Scholarships:**

- Keep track of the Financial Aid form requirements for each of your colleges. Check the 'Financial Aid' section of each college website.
- Research available scholarships (Refer to the 'Financial Aid & Scholarships' section of this guide).

#### **College Information**

- **College Visits**—Check the school calendar for potential visit opportunities (quarter break, faculty in-service, various holidays, etc.). A campus visit provides significant opportunity to gather first hand information about a college of interest.
- **College representatives** visit SI throughout the Fall. Visit appointments are posted in the announcements, on the bulletin board outside the counseling center, as well as on the counseling center website and Family Connection. If you keep your prospective college list current on Family Connection, you'll be informed through email of those specific visits.

#### **Standardized Testing**

- Create a testing schedule tailored to your specific needs. Most colleges accept the SAT or ACT (with writing) and many recommend (or require) 2 or 3 SAT Subject Tests (different subjects of your choice). Once you have your basic college list, investigate the specific testing requirements for each college.
- Register online & take the necessary SAT and/or ACT tests.  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) / [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

**Mid-Year 'To Do' List**

- Make sure all test scores have been sent to all colleges.
- Send Mid-Year Reports through [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com).
- Make sure all the colleges you applied to are updated in Family Connection.
- When required, call admissions office to arrange interview.
- Complete FAFSA. Be sure you keep a duplicate copy of the FAFSA before you mail it.
- Cal Grant GPA Verification form: have your counselor sign it and send it in before the deadline.
- Student Aid Report (SAR): Read over it carefully as soon as it arrives. Make any corrections and return. If no corrections, keep it until you decide which college you will attend.

**Fall Timeline**

**September**

**15<sup>th</sup> Fall Meeting Period**

Seniors will meet with their counselor in a classroom setting to review the "Nuts and Bolts of the College Process" (see "Nuts and Bolts" section of this handbook for more information).

**15<sup>th</sup> (7pm) Senior Parent Night**

**October**

**5<sup>th</sup> Early admission recommendation requests Due**

Completed packets must be turned in to teachers and counselors.  
All College Information must be updated on Family Connection.

**12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Midterm Exams**

**15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Faculty In-Service and Quarter Break** \*Great Time for College Visits !

**November**

**9<sup>th</sup> Teacher/Counselor recommendation requests Due**

Completed packets must be turned in to teachers and counselors.  
All College Information must be updated on Family Connection.

**30<sup>th</sup> University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) applications due**

**December**

**15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Final Exams**

## Spring Semester 'To Do' List & Timeline

### Spring 'To Do' List

- Read all College acceptances and the conditions of acceptance carefully.
- Be especially careful about reading the financial aid offer from each college; compare grants, loans, etc. from each college.
- Update your Acceptances, Waitlists and Denials in Family Connection.
- Have all information in hand before making any decisions.
- Send Student Aid Report (SAR) to the college you're attending.
- Indicate which college you will be attending in Family Connection.
- Send a Thank You Note to each person who wrote a recommendation on your behalf.
- Watch the mail/email for College registration and orientation information.
- Write thank you letters for any scholarships received, or any form of assistance that went 'above and beyond' in support of your application.
- Submit a final transcript through [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com)

### Spring Timeline

#### January

13<sup>th</sup> Financial Aid Night

#### March

2<sup>nd</sup> **Cal Grant Form deadline**

8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> **Midterm Exams**

#### April

1<sup>st</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> **Holy Week & Easter Break**

**TIME FOR FINAL COLLEGE VISITS IF NECESSARY!!!**

12<sup>th</sup> **Classes Resume**

#### May

1<sup>st</sup> **Deadline to submit 'Student Intent to Register'** (SIR) in with a deposit (one college only!)

18<sup>th</sup> **Transition to College Night**

#### June

1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> **Final Exams**

3<sup>rd</sup> **Baccalaureate Mass**

5<sup>th</sup> **Graduation!**

**Family Connection: <http://connection.naviance.com/siprep>**

Family Connection has an integral role for students as they apply to college. The SI Counseling Department has created a specific process for students to follow to help ensure complete applications. Many of the steps involved require extensive use of Family Connection, particularly if students are applying to college using the Common Application.

**Counseling News and Reminders**

Relevant updates for the college process in addition to upcoming SI events are included on the Family Connection homepage.

**Applying to College**

Complete details of the college application process may be found under 'Nuts & Bolts' in the College Section of this handbook.

In general, the following tasks are to be completed by seniors using Family Connection:

**My Colleges**

- Submit the final college list by the end of September.  
Make sure that the list is now under 'Active Applications' instead of 'Prospective Colleges'.  
If the college list changes at any time during the school year, students should correct their list on Family Connection and meet with their counselor to discuss in person. Both steps are essential to ensure that any changes were effectively communicated. Students may add and remove colleges as often as necessary.
- Privacy Notice for Common Application: Allows SI faculty and counselors to submit Common Application recommendations online. Follow the specific instructions contained in the 'Nuts & Bolts' section of this handbook.

**If applying to any college using the Common Application students should take the following steps:**

1. Register for a Common Application account on [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).
  2. Log on to Family Connection and complete the Privacy Notice found under 'My Colleges'.  
The specific username/password for the Common Application account is required.
- Make note of Admission Decisions for each of your colleges when you are notified.

**Transcripts - Docufide**

- Request official transcripts by accessing Docufide by clicking on "transcripts" under 'About College'.  
Or, go to [www.docufide.com](http://www.docufide.com). Students must create an account on Docufide prior to requesting transcripts.

**Please Note:** University of California and California State University require students to manually enter grades on the application. Transcripts are not accepted until the final transcript at the end of senior year.

**Scholarship List & Scholarship Match**

- **Scholarship List:** Includes scholarships or financial aid awards that might be applicable to the student. Students may choose to "Add Selected Scholarships To My List" after doing their research.
- **Scholarship Match:** Provides students with a list of scholarships that might be applicable to the student who logs on to his/her Family Connection account. These scholarships were entered by the Counseling Department.