

# ***Bishop Grimes College Planning Handbook***

## **Introduction**

*\*Please note the attachments to assist you in requesting recommendations and transcripts during your college process.*

This handbook was prepared as a basic resource/guide to the college admissions process. This booklet should be just one resource of many you use in your college planning process. We have included, when possible, worksheets and checklists for this important process. Use these forms, copy them, write all over them, and keep them to review and compare your impressions and information on various schools. The more informed you are, the better decisions you can make for yourself and your future.

Your counselor is available to help you at any time with this process as well as with other issues. The Guidance Office telephone number is 463-8133. We have numerous resources available in our office to support all students making educational plans beyond high school.

Learning how to make choices and decisions based on sound and reliable information is a valuable lifelong skill. We encourage you to meet with your counselor TODAY!!!!

## **Academic Planning**

One of the first priorities that you need to focus on as you begin your senior year is to make certain that you take and successfully complete all the required subjects necessary for graduation. We have included the course requirements below.

Please make certain that you review the requirements before school begins in September. Your counselor has an updated credit check sheet on all seniors. Please contact the Guidance office if you are unsure of your credit standing. The second priority you need to focus on is making certain that you have a balanced and challenging academic program. It is essential that you investigate the course requirements for each college of interest. Do they need two years of a lab science? Do they require that you have two years of a foreign language? Will you be required to take foreign language for general education requirements at college or can you waive this with a fourth year of language at Bishop Grimes? Even though a lighter schedule may tempt you during your last year of high school, you need to know that colleges want to see that you are continuing to challenge yourself during your final year of high school. The Guidance office is typically asked to send your senior schedule along with current report cards and high school transcript.

## ***Graduation Requirements***

Religious Studies	4 credits
English	4 credits
History	4 credits
Math	4 credits
Science	4 credits
Second Language (4 <sup>th</sup> credit is strongly recommended)	3 credits
Physical Education	2 credits
Health	.5 credits
Art/Music	1 credits
Electives	Optional
Total Credits	26.5 credits

# A Timetable and Checklist for Juniors/Seniors

Starting Spring of your Junior year

## April-August

- Take ACT and SAT. Sign up at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) and [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- Send for college catalogs and information, research online at college websites and collegeboard.com and make college visits.
- Search for scholarship information online at fastweb.com and check homeroom bulletin boards regularly.
- If you are unsure of schools that offer your major(s), then please meet with your counselor to assist you in your search for the college(s) that meet your specifications.
- Complete a **recommendation sheet**, photocopy it, and present it to those you are asking to write a letter of recommendation for you. (See attached recommendation sheet)
- If you plan on playing **NCAA Division I or II sports**, you must fill out a **Clearinghouse registration form** located online at <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/>

## September

- **Organize yourself** by housing each application in a folder. **Write all major deadlines** on the front cover of each folder. If you make contact with an admissions and/or financial aid counselor, write these names on the folder along with their phone numbers. **Log all contacts.**
- Discuss college choices with your counselor.
- Check homeroom bulletin board and wall/door near the Guidance office to learn of College Representatives visiting Bishop Grimes.
- Start drafting the college essay(s).

## October

- Solidify essay topics. Ask for assistance from your English instructor and your counselor.
- All students should complete at least one application by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Schedule meetings with your counselor to review progress and to have your questions answered. All are welcome during study hall/lounge times.
- Attend college visits at Bishop Grimes, college fairs, and financial aid workshops.
- Contact coaches or directors of activities if you plan to participate in sports or extra-curricular activities at college.

## November

- Bring school report/secondary report sections of all college applications to the Guidance office as soon as they become available to you.
- Please use the attached **Transcript Request Form** to request official transcripts, schedule, and current grades sent to each school.
- **Make certain that you are aware and tell Guidance of all deadlines! Do NOT wait until the last minute.**
- Check on scholarships available to you both locally and nationally. A list of some of these is posted outside the Guidance office and in senior homerooms. A folder of scholarships is available for review in guidance.
- If you are in need of financial aid in the coming years, you and your parents are invited to attend our financial aid presentation scheduled for December/January. All families should apply via FAFSA in order to access any other college aid/scholarships.
- Identify if your school requires the **CSS Profile**. Many private colleges/universities require that you register with CSS early!

## DECEMBER

- Many application deadlines fall on January 1st . **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS BREAK.**
- Make certain that you have given your counselor all necessary sections to review. Schedule a time to review your completed college application with your counselor. **Please do not wait until the deadline is upon you.** We may not be able to process your application in time.
- Remember to attend the financial aid night and complete the FAFSA by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Make certain that you are continuing to challenge yourself academically.

## **JANUARY**

- File more college applications
- Do income taxes as soon as possible; use actual figures (not estimates) on your financial aid application. Both you and your parents should **file early!**
- Check that all materials have been received by colleges.
- Check all deadlines for financial aid at each school to which you have applied. The earlier you send in your financial aid packages, the better your chances of being considered for certain grants/awards
- **Mid-year grades and Update dTranscript will be sent in February to each school you notified guidance you applied to during the year.**

## **FEBRUARY**

- Make certain that you are checking the scholarship files and keep listening to the daily announcements.
- Maintain contact with both the admissions and financial aid counselors at each school to which you have applied.

## **MARCH**

- AP Exam sign up and fees due.
- Scholarship applications available in Guidance.
- Continue to work hard in all of your classes.
- Visit campuses if necessary.

## **APRIL**

- Receive decisions.
- Compare financial aid packages.
- If your top choice school does not offer you the best package, then contact the financial aid counselor and ask them to recalculate/reevaluate your package. **NEGOTIATE!**

- Let the top choice school know that you have received better packages (if applicable) at competitive schools.
- Write a personal note explaining financial aid circumstances, if necessary. This is especially for changes in family circumstances such as a job loss, change in income, or household composition.
- Notify all colleges to which you have applied about your decision.
- Wait list applicants: send a letter restating your interest.
- Send deposit to selected college (**usually by May 1<sup>st</sup>**).

## **MAY**

- Take AP tests if appropriate.
- Notify Guidance of ALL college acceptances and your college choice.
- Notify Guidance of ALL scholarships you are offered and ones you will receive.
- Schedule your college orientation session.
- Listen to announcements for graduation updates.

## **JUNE**

- ***Congratulations!! You did it!!!!***

## ***Recommendation Request***

*Fill this sheet out once. Copy and distribute to two or three teachers for letters of recommendation and bring a copy to guidance for your file.*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Student: Please respond to the following questions to assist teachers in writing a letter about you.**

What is your intended college major?

What is your ultimate career goal?

If you are unsure, please identify a career that interests you at this time.

What school(s) are you interested in attending? Please list names below:

List outstanding accomplishments and record of community services (attach if necessary):

List any clubs, sports or work that you have done in high school:

*Teacher please see reverse side. Complete and attach a signed and dated letter. Return this form with the attached letter to Guidance.*

**Teacher: Please include the following information in your letter.**

- How long and in what capacity have you known this student?
- Include your teaching area and the course(s) you taught this student. You may also want to include clubs or sports in which you supervised this student.
- Please mention your assessment of the student's motivation, leadership abilities and academic level of achievement.
- Attach your typed letter.
- Be sure to include the date and your signature on your letter.

## Transcript Request Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

College Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address or Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline \_\_\_\_\_

**SAT and ACT test scores are sent with transcripts. If you do NOT want them sent check here \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Some colleges will only accept SAT and ACT scores direct from your collegeboard and act accounts. It is up to the student to contact each of their colleges to be sure scores are confirmed.**