

Time to Plan for College!
by Aleks Bonenko

As the year comes to an end, Skyline seniors prepare to move on from high school. Some will choose to go to college, some will choose to take a year off, others will join the military, and some will choose a completely different route. Unfortunately, the time seniors would be spending enjoying their last months as high schoolers has been cancelled. This current pandemic has put more stress on everybody, including those who wish to move to high education. However, there is still hope for furthering education and for doing so in a constructive manner. *The Forum* wanted to give some tips and suggestions on how to manage time and stay positive while transitioning to this new and exciting experience.

Before planning finances and room and board situations the most important thing to do is pick a college. Some seniors have many options for where they want to pursue a career, and now is the time to narrow the list down to one.

After hopefully being admitted into a the desired college, CollegeRaptor.com recommends creating a pre-college calendar that includes dates and times for orientations, tours (which are now offered online by a lot of schools), registration for classes, and when financial aid forms are due.

Not every senior knows what they want to do when they first get to college, honestly most people do not know what they want to do throughout most of college anyway. However, every senior needs to create a starting point in order to choose the right classes to propel them forward, this is often through a basic associate's degree. All college students take classes that are boring, hard, or undesirable. Picking a good starting point can help all seniors find classes that interest them and may even spark a passion to pursue.

Next, not all seniors going to college use the dorms, but if this is an option preparing for how this will look is a very important step. For those seniors going out of state and far from home, it is good to have a set plan of what to bring, how to get there, and being mentally prepared to live away from home. This idea can be applied to all seniors going into college. College is a complete new experience and needs to be treated as such. Running straight into independence with no clue how to do it will not end well. Being prepared and as mentally ready as possible will do the greatest good.

Finances are the one thing no senior wants to think about, but sadly it is the most important factor of getting to and through college. The fall, spring, and summer months before college is the time to apply for scholarships, grants, federal aid, and student loans. According to Ticas.org, 66 percent of college graduates have student loans ranging from 29-35 thousand dollars. Of course scholarships are ideal, but not everyone has this opportunity. Student loans and federal aid are the most used. For those lucky enough to have parent support and willingness to finance, this can take off lots of pressure. However, everyone should learn to plan ahead and plan smart in order to be the best prepared.

Graduating high school is a tremendous accomplishment and reward, however, it does not come without a price. Now seniors have to learn how to be contributing adults. Some choose to do this by going to college, others not. Those planning for college need to know that it

is not easy and it isn't always fun, but getting set up with a strong plan and strong support makes all the difference.



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