

Seniors

The fall is a very busy time for all. We trust Thanksgiving Break offers everyone a time to take a breath and reflect on the blessings in our lives. Now is a good time to review where you stand in the college process and make preparations as we enter the final stretch of first semester. Students and parents should review and discuss the following:

COLLEGE LISTS:

Goal: To have a finalized before winter break.

1. Confirm college list – your official list is defined by the “Colleges I Am Applying To” in Naviance. This list reflects what you have submitted on your blue sheet to date. Many students have adjusted this list throughout the fall – the colleges, the type of application (EA, ED, RD, etc.) and *how* they are submitting (Common Application or school website). Pay close attention to the deadlines. If there is a discrepancy or if you have question, please notify Ms. Papillon immediately. Be aware that merit scholarship deadlines can be earlier than the stated RD deadline.
2. A balanced list is the key ingredient to a successful college process. The counselors continue to meet to review each senior’s college list. We strive for each student to have 2-3 likely schools as well as 2-3 colleges in each of the possible and reach categories. Counselors may reach out to students to review college lists.
3. The final due date for your blue sheet, (request to send transcript form) is December 3. This form is the official request we use to send your school documents. Failure to submit an accurate blue sheet may result in an incomplete application.
4. Make sure to match your Common Application and Naviance college lists. The only way for Breck to send school documents to colleges to which you are applying through the Common Application is if you have the college on both lists.
5. Teacher Recommendation forms are past due. Ms. Papillon works diligently with teachers to make sure all materials are submitted to colleges in a timely manner. It is the goal to have all teacher recommendations completed by winter break so Ms. Papillon can submit to colleges before the New Year. Failure to ask two teachers by December 3 tells us that you will not seek any more recommendations from Breck teachers.

APPLICATIONS:

Goal: To be mostly completed with January application deadlines *before* exams.

1. Get organized & work towards completing all applications and supplements. Now is the time to review what each college requires and to develop a plan for completing the applications well in advance of the deadlines.
2. Draft essays and short answers. Don’t wait until the last moment! Keep working ahead. Develop a game plan to get things done by break or shortly into break. Counselors will be away from campus for most of break, so please plan for longer response times.

3. Send ACT and SAT scores. Remember, you are responsible for sending your official test scores to your colleges. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Order your scores online via the testing agency website.
4. Confirm teacher recommendations. For 90% of seniors, this step is completed as they have already submitted a full application to at least one college. Typically, a college requires two teacher recommendations in addition to the counselor letter. Our counsel is to follow these guidelines and not exceed the number requested. As a matter of fact, most colleges limit the number of teacher recommendations that can be submitted online.
5. Review supplemental recommendations/information requirements, if applicable. If you are applying to a specific program that requires a supplement (i.e. arts or science), the college often directs you to the appropriate supplement with precise instructions. Your counselor will be glad to guide you through the process.
6. Ensure that your applications reach their destinations. Here are some reminders when submitting the rest of your applications.
 - a. Send applications and test scores in a timely manner – several weeks in advance of the deadline. This will give the admissions office staff plenty of time to process them.
 - b. Save a copy of everything. Save a PDF of each application you submit. Hang on to notes or emails from admissions offices, personal identification numbers and passwords and even cancelled checks.
 - c. Keep your name consistent. Choose one name and stick with it. If you include your middle name on one document, you must remember to use it on all other forms. If you have a nickname, decide whether you will apply using that name or your given name. Either way, don't switch once you've chosen because the likelihood of mix-ups and missing pieces will increase.
 - d. Get the facts. Even if part of your application really is missing, the situation is often easily remedied. Take a deep breath. Check with Ms. Papillon to verify what was sent.
 - e. Confirm receipt of materials via application portal. Colleges will contact you regarding missing information. Make sure you keep your counselor and Ms Papillon up to date with any needs.
7. Write thank you notes to teachers. Please take the time to hand write a thank you note to the teachers who have written your recommendations. They will certainly want to share in your joy when you are admitted, so do keep them posted on updates, but now is the time to tell them thank you. No emails. A handwritten note is the way to go.

FINANCIAL AID:

Goal: To know what information is required for each college as well as the deadline to apply for financial aid.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT FINANCIAL AID! Now is the time to review the Financial Aid process at each school. Deadlines are important! Missing a deadline can result in a reduced or no award. The CSS Profile and FAFSA should be completed as soon as possible. Our advice is to submit your financial aid application for a college when you submit your application to the admission office.

COLLEGE DECISIONS:

Goal: To keep in conversation with Ms Papillon and your counselor.

As you hear decisions, please inform us—we want to celebrate, to console, and to advise. Ms. Papillon will update your Naviance list to reflect the outcomes.

As colleges release their decisions, please keep in mind the following:

1. Be positive. Though you may have poured your heart and soul into an application, the decision is not personal! Admissions offices are building a class and your decision is not made in a vacuum. Colleges are looking to fill their orchestra, sports teams, academic department majors, and other priorities. One decision – good or bad – is not a judgment of who you are or your accomplishments. Keep talking to the college office. Communication is key!
2. Be sensitive to others. This is a hard time for all. Decisions, especially denials, can be difficult to receive. Please be thoughtful of your classmates. Let's support one another through this process. It will be over soon enough. Focus on the relationships we have built over this year and the many years leading up to this point!
3. Throughout the remainder of the fall term, in addition to our work with students and families, the counselors are reaching out to all colleges to which our students have applied to advocate, offer updates and insights, and to answer questions colleges may have. Keep your counselor informed about updates or changes in your life. It could be helpful in our outreach efforts.

FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE APPLIED EARLY:

- You need not submit your remaining Regular Decision applications with January deadlines or later until you hear from your early school(s) with December notification dates. However, this should not prevent you from working towards completing your remaining applications now.
- If a college contacts you about missing information, please check with the College Counseling Office immediately. Be yet, log into your portals to confirm!
- If you are accepted EARLY DECISION (a binding agreement) ...
Tell Ms. Papillon and your counselor. *You need to promptly write each of the other colleges (copying your counselor) to withdraw your application.* Before doing so, however, be sure the financial aid estimate is appropriate.
- If you are accepted EARLY ACTION or ROLLING (a non-binding acceptance) ...
You may decide that you want to alter your list based on this new information. Please speak with your college counselor. It is very important that you keep us informed about what you are doing.
- If you were DEFERRED in your early application ...
Speak with your counselor. We will discuss strategies for updating your file to insure that the admissions office has new information as they consider your application in the regular round.

REMEMBER THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SENIOR SLUMP. Your first semester grades will be sent to all the colleges you have applied. Schools watch your grades

carefully all year long. They hold the right to reconsider your acceptance after receiving your final grades in May.

Please keep in mind that counselors and Ms. Papillon will also be on vacation during break. Ms. Papillon will be in the office periodically and be aware that our office will be closed on December 24, 25 and December 28 through January 1.

Thank you to all for a wonderful first semester thus far. We wish you a joyous and restful break.

Juniors

It is common for juniors to feel increased pressure and anxiety surrounding school. There are increased expectations in the classroom and the college process becomes all the more real. Over the next few months, students (and parents) will begin to feel the college process ramping up. The goal for each student is to have at least one official testing on the books early this spring and to have a working college list heading into the summer. There are a number of steps that will take place second semester, and December will serve as a launching pad of sorts.

INCREASED COMMUNICATION FROM COLLEGE COUNSELING: Beginning in January, College Counseling will be in more contact with juniors and parents.

GRADE 11 COLLEGE NIGHT, JANUARY 8, 6:30 PM IN THE CHAPEL. All juniors and parents are expected to attend! This evening we will cover what you need to know for the second semester and how the process should unfold.

College Counseling will host a series of Coffee Talks in the Heritage Room at Anderson Ice Arena.

- January 17, 2019 – Resources for the College Process
- March 7, 2019 – Developing a Balanced List
- April 25, 2019 – Common App – nuts and bolts
- May 23, 2019 – Senior Year – What's it like?

Additionally, we will ask for *two parent questionnaires* as well as additional student inputs as well. *These are essential to our work.* Be sure to adhere to the deadlines so we can stay on track in this process.

DEADLINES FOR RESEARCH AND SEMESTER PROGRAMS. If you are thinking of applying, be sure to contact the department head, your Grade Dean, and your college counselor.

PSAT SCORES. Students received their practice test books and practice ACT scores during last week's advisory. PSAT scores should arrive on December 10th via email to the address they used on the PSAT from the College Board. If students do not receive an email by December 17, please stop in the college counseling office. Please check your spam folder prior to coming into the office. These results will inform the testing plan conversation.

SAT AND ACT TEST DATES AND REGISTRATION DEADLINES. Counselors expect to connect with all juniors to discuss an individualized testing plan. If a student plans on sitting for the February ACT, they should plan on scheduling an appointment with their counselor prior to the January 10 registration deadline. Please remember that you are responsible for registering for the tests you plan to take.

FOR THOSE SEEKING ACCOMMODATIONS, please speak with your college counselor and Ms. Blanchette.

TEST PREP OPTIONS. There's no doubt that preparation helps. There are many different ways to prepare, both free and at cost. The best approach is to develop a long-term plan using a combination of coursework and practice tests. The key ingredient to improving results is the use of practice tests.

1. Self-preparation through a book or online. Both the SAT and ACT websites offer services through ACT Online and the SAT's My College Quickstart.
2. One-on-one tutoring,
3. Test preparation course, or
4. Combination of the above.

As you notice, doing nothing is not advisable.

Thank you to all for a wonderful first semester thus far. We wish you a joyous and restful break.

Sophomores

COLLEGE COUNSELOR ASSIGNMENTS will be mailed home in mid-December. Sophomores will be asked to set a meeting time with your counselor early next semester to allow the counselor to start to get to know your student and to discuss class scheduling. We ask that the first meetings be held between the student and the counselor. We are looking forward to working with you!

ATTEND THE JANUARY 29 COLLEGE NIGHT FOR GRADES 9-10! You will find the date noted on your Breck School calendar. This evening will be full of information for students and parents alike.

Practice SAT and Practice ACT test results will be distributed to sophomores this evening

A NOTE ON COURSE SCHEDULING:

Your child will embark on the first step in the college process in early in the new year: meeting with the college counselor. Over the course of the next year, counselors hope to develop a relationship with your child, help prepare an appropriate schedule, and discuss the countless opportunities for involvement outside the classroom that will help in discovering and developing passions and interests. Our goal is to find the right balance: a schedule with the appropriate combination of challenge and rigor, involvement in clubs, music, art, theater, athletics, service opportunities, and the countless opportunities beyond campus, and time to enjoy being a teenager.

Part of the course registration process may include AP courses. The departments will distribute information about their respective processes. Please be on the lookout for this material and be mindful of the deadlines! In prelude to this conversation, we advise you to spend some time over break discussing your child's academic experience, academic interests, involvement and other time commitments.

DEADLINES FOR RESEARCH AND SEMESTER PROGRAMS. If you are thinking of applying, be sure to contact the department head, your Grade Dean, and your college counselor.

Thank you to all for a wonderful first semester thus far. We wish you a joyous and restful break.

Freshmen

With nearly a full semester under your belt, you should:

1. Prepare well for exams. These may be some of the longest tests you have ever taken. Prepare well and in advance. Utilize the Saturday review dates, get in to talk with teachers about questions you may have, and take advantage of any and all opportunities to review. Your success is largely dependent upon appropriate planning, organization and effort!
2. Continue to develop good habits. Reflect on the year. What is working? What is not working? What are some goals you can establish for second semester?
3. Get involved. Think about ways you want to get involved at Breck and in your community. These should reflect your interests. Ever wondered what it would be like to be on stage, to build a robot, or to explore something that you've always wanted to try? Well, now is the time!
4. Think about summer. Though summer feels like it may never arrive, take heart! You can think warm as you plan for how you will spend your summer. Have conversations with your parents, friends, and advisors. Summer should be fun and relaxing! And, it can be productive, too!

ATTEND THE JANUARY 29 COLLEGE NIGHT FOR GRADES 9-10! You will find the date noted on your Breck School calendar. This evening will be full of information for students and parents alike.

Practice PSAT9 test results will be distributed to freshmen on this evening.

Thank you to all for a wonderful first semester thus far. We wish you a joyous and restful break.

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