

JUNIORS – APRIL NEWSLETTER

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My name is Julie Sitko and I am the College and Career Counselor. This is the time to think about life after high school. My role is to advise and support students and families in the college search and to help identify “best fit” colleges and universities, and to assist students in realizing their post-secondary goals. This monthly newsletter will keep you on track for post-secondary planning. Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Here are some things to think about as we go through your child’s junior year:

Spring - Post-Secondary Timeline for juniors

- Begin the college and career exploration process with Naviance
- Begin to talk, as a family, about what your child wants to do after graduating from high school. Although the student makes the ultimate decision about what they want to do after high school, input from parents and guardians is helpful and appreciated.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT, if your child wants to test
- If your child is thinking of testing – do test prep
- Participate in programming hosted by colleges. Information is posted on the schools’ individual websites. Schools are doing both virtual and in person visitation programs.
- A copy of your child’s transcript has been uploaded into the Portfolio section of Skyward, at the beginning of this school year. Look over the transcript and save a copy for your records. If there are any questions or concerns about the transcript, please reach out to your child’s school counselor.
- All colleges/universities have a Net Price Calculator on their websites (generally on the financial aid page). This is an excellent resource to help you and your family determine how much you can anticipate paying at each school you’re looking at. Use this tool as a resource to help you determine affordability.

College Counseling Series at Moon Area HS: These are evening programs for families and students to learn more about the post-secondary planning process. All evening programs are open to both students and parent. All programs are virtual and meeting links will be provided the month of the program. Most of these programs are in conjunction with other, local high schools. Here is what is coming:

Understanding NCAA Eligibility

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

6:30 PM

Representatives from the University of Pittsburgh Athletics Office is going to walk us through understanding initial NCAA Eligibility for Divisions I, II, and III. They will also provide a glimpse of life as a collegiate athlete. [Please register for the meeting](#). Once you register, you’ll get the meeting link.

ACT and SAT testing:

If your child wants to test, go to the testing websites for information about testing and open test sites. **(SAT: www.collegeboard.org and ACT: www.act.org).** A schedule of tests dates is in the class of 2025 Teams (under Post-Secondary Planning, then files). The same list is also on the High School Counseling Center webpage. Before deciding if your child wants to test, check with the schools they are interested in and determine if they need to test. Schools who are test optional are often examining the transcript much closer. For example, if your child is interested in studying business, colleges will look closely at the math classes they took and the grades earned in those math classes. If students want to test and safely can, do so.

--Students on free/reduced lunch are eligible for a fee waiver. Have your child see their school counselor or Ms. Sitko

--Every college accepts either the SAT or ACT. There is no preference.

--The SAT eliminated the writing portion of their exam, as well as the subject tests. When registering for the ACT, I do not recommend taking the writing portion of the exam. I do not think it will be necessary for admission.

--Check out this site to see if schools your child is interested in have determined their testing policies

<https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>.

ACT/SAT Prep:

Students taking ACT and SAT tests should do some sort of preparation prior to taking the tests. There are many resources available for test prep. [All students have FREE access to Khan Academy](#) – an online program that partners with College Board (owners of the SAT) to provide test prep to students. [ACT also has online test prep](#). These are both fantastic resources.

[Penn State Beaver](#) is offering in- person SAT prep classes.

[3RPrep](#) is located across the street from Old Economy Village, just five miles from Moon. They offer individualized one-on-one tutoring, group classes, and practice proctored exams. If you want a personal study plan and individual attention, these are the guys to see. Visit their website for more information or call 833-773-7522.

[Goldstein Test Prep](#) - Offering both in person and virtual tutoring options for the SAT and ACT. They also do academic tutoring. Call 412-874-7645 or fill out an interest form on their website.

[Eaton Prep](#) is offering classes at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center for the various tests.

Visiting schools:

If you have a chance to visit schools, here are things to think about when you're on campus:

--Talk to people in the department of anticipated study. If your child is totally undecided, talk to the schools about what they do to help pick a major. Colleges have robust career centers and advising programs which help students pick a major, find internships, jobs and graduate schools.

--Ask what is the four-year graduation rate? Colleges report a six-year graduation rate, due to financial aid. Ask about the four-year graduation rate— schools should try to get students in and out in four years – make sure the school is going to help your child make the best use of their time and get the classes needed to get out in time.

--Ask what is the retention rate for returning sophomores? This number can tell you a lot about what schools are doing to make students happy and keep them enrolled. If a number is low, ask why students are leaving – what's going on? If the number is high, it's safe to assume students are generally happy and the college is doing a good job of educating students and keeping them happy.

--College is not just about getting a degree. It's about so much more. Is your child going to be challenged at each school? Are they going to have to put in more effort than they ever have? That's a good thing!

--Learn the middle 50% SAT/ACT scores and GPA of admitted students at the schools that interest you. This can serve as a guide to schools that will be a good academic fit for you. Also – remember if board scores are lower than the middle 50%, but the GPA fits in the middle 50%, in most cases, students do not need to submit test scores, if they could potentially hurt an application. Keep in mind, with most schools being test optional, the students who are submitting test scores generally have higher scores, so the middle 50% are going to be skewed to the higher end.

Emails from Post-Secondary Schools:

If you have not yet, you will be getting inundated with emails from colleges. I have a few suggestions on how you can manage the emails.

1. Create an email address just for post-secondary planning. That way, all of the emails you get from colleges won't flood your regular inbox.
2. You can create a folder in your email and filter emails from the colleges you think you want to look at later. You can also create a folder of schools that you are interested in, so you don't miss any important messages from them.
3. Check this email account once a week or every few days. Delete messages you're not interested in. You're going to be overwhelmed with information from colleges and managing the emails is necessary, so you don't miss anything important.

Scholarships:

All scholarships that come through our office are listed in Naviance. To find the scholarships, log in to your Naviance account, go to the colleges>scholarships and money>Scholarship Search. The scholarships we get in the counseling center are listed on the 'scholarship list' page. That site is updated regularly, so be sure to check back regularly as new scholarships are posted. Many scholarships posted in Naviance are for seniors, but there are some for juniors. My

favorite scholarship search sites are: www.goingmerry.com, www.scholarships.com, www.fastweb.com, www.scholarshipamerica.org, www.finaid.org

Here are two good resources for paying for college and understanding financial aid:

www.mysmartborrowing.com

www.collegecosts.ed.gov

Here are a few scholarships for juniors:

[Horatio Alger Scholarship](#) – one of the nation's largest need-based college scholarship programs, this scholarship specifically assists high school students who have faced and overcome great obstacles in their young lives. There are national and state scholarships and scholarships specifically for students going into career training programs.

[QuestBridge](#) – full scholarships for students who have shown outstanding academic ability despite financial challenges. There is no minimum GPA or test cut-off, or income.

The [Bryan Cameron Education Foundation](#) has opened up applications to the high-school graduating **Class of 2024** for the **Cameron Impact Scholarship** (merit-based, 4-year, full-tuition). A Cameron Impact Scholar must show evidence of strong academics (3.7 unweighted GPA or higher), leadership, community service, participation in extracurriculars, and a desire to make a positive impact on the world around them.

Early Application Deadline: May 24, 2024

Regular Application Deadline: September 5, 2024

[College Board's Opportunity Scholarships](#): If you use College Board for college searches or practicing for the SAT through Khan Academy, you could win scholarship money.

NCAA:

If your child is an athlete considering playing sports at a division I or II school, make sure to visit the NCAA Eligibility Center website www.eligibilitycenter.org. Student athletes need to submit an official high school transcript (requested through Naviance) and official test scores, if they are available. These scores must be sent directly from ACT or College Board. Students can still gain eligibility without test scores. *This registration does not apply to students attending division III or NAIA schools.*

If you are looking for good college resources, here are two of my favorites:

[Georgia Tech Admission Blog](#) has a lot of great information not specific about Georgia Tech, but about the college search and selection process in general. The blog is insightful, educational, and humorous.

[The College Essay Guy](#) – another great website for assistance in writing college essays, along with general information about the college search/selection process. He is witty and has awesome advice on essays. He charges a fee to review essays, but he also has a lot of free information on his website.

Summer Jobs:

[Sewickley YMCA](#) is looking for summer camp counselors, swim coaches, and lifeguards.

[Simcoach Games](#) is accepting applications for its 2024 Summer Apprenticeship in Game Design and Development starting on June 10, 2024 and running through July 19, 2024. They are looking for Summer Apprentices to build game prototypes as employees of Simcoach Games' Game Studio. You will PRACTICE PRODUCING (scheduling, team leader, organizing), STORYTELLING (business, marketing, game design), ART (2d/3d art, animation, concepting, performance), GAME DESIGN (goals, rules design, what content is translated to interactivity within a game framework) and DEVELOPING (coding) as part of a team.

Summer Opportunities:

[Black College Institute at Virginia Tech](#) – for Black students who are intellectually curious and interested in attending Virginia Tech. To be eligible:

1. Must be a rising junior or rising senior in high school

2. Must have an interest in attending Virginia Tech
3. Must be highly motivated and academically curious

The [Health and Biomedical Sciences Summer Camp](#), will be held virtually through Lebanon Valley College and is a great opportunity to get insight into the scientific basis of human health. The summer camp provides high school students with a window into the scientific basis of medicine and human health. There is a cost to this program.

The [Readiness Institute Summer Program through Penn State University](#) is a six-week paid experience for rising high school seniors that helps them become community and future ready. Participants will have the opportunity to establish relationships and rituals, participate in essential skill workshops, complete projects that address real-world problems, and create personalized road maps for future success. After the program concludes, participants will have continued access to support including mentorship, additional learning experiences, and peer networking. Each participant will receive a stipend. Transportation will be provided as needed. Applications due March 31, 2024.

[The Ice-T Project](#) is an initiative of The Citizen Science Lab, Black/African-American High School Youth will learn the computational and experimental techniques required to examine the physiology, biochemistry, and voltage potential of microbial fuel cells (MFC), a living battery made powered by bacteria. Once participants learn the basics they will then build and create their own device powered by these living batteries. More information will be share on the website as it becomes available.

[University of Pennsylvania – Engineering Summer Academy at Penn \(ESAP\)](#) Program runs July 10-30 and offers a rigorous and challenging opportunity to experience college-level coursework. The program combines theory with hands-on practical experience in cutting-edge technologies. Students can earn college credit in one of six programs.

[Freddie Fu Sports Medicine Scholarship Program](#) – this is a six-week internship (490 hours a week) during the summer. The intern will have the opportunity to observe patient evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation by physical therapists and athletic trainers, and will have responsibilities comparable to those of a Physical Therapy Aide. There will also be opportunities to observe clients in our sports performance program, as well as patient care and surgery with various physicians. There is a \$2000.00 scholarship associated with this program. Application deadline April 13, 2024.

[Wiegand Summer Internship at the University of Pittsburgh McGown Institute for Regenerative Medicine](#) is designed to provide upcoming high school seniors with an introduction to the rapidly evolving area of regenerative medicine and regenerative medicine research. This is a one-month summer internship at the McGowan Institute and a \$1200.00 stipend.

[University of Pittsburgh: Pharmacy Career Exploration](#) - Created for rising high school juniors and seniors, RxPLORE is a professional summer camp that provides exposure to the critical role pharmacists play within healthcare. If you already have a passion for pharmacy or are just starting to explore career options within the healthcare field, RxPLORE is right for you! Form valuable connections with faculty and current pharmacy students while you explore some of the many career options available for a PharmD! There are both online in and in person camps offered.

[The Wildlife Leadership Academy](#) enriches Pennsylvania teens and empowers them to become certified conservation ambassadors through a five-day residential summer field school program. Program costs \$500 for the week, and scholarships are available.

[Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week \(PFEW\)](#) is a one-of-a-kind summer program that offers in-coming high school juniors and seniors a unique and challenging opportunity to see what it is like to run their own business. Participants will make up an "imaginary" management team where they will learn first-hand about the Free Enterprise System. Their task - turn their failing company into a financial success. They will develop their own marketing strategies, design a website and, make all the decisions that are demanded of real-life company executives. This weeklong program is at Lycoming College, in Williamsport and students have the option to choose between four different weeks. PFEW is FREE, although there is a \$295 non-refundable registration fee.

[Carnegie Mellon](#) is offering several in-person Summer Pre-College Programs in architecture, art, computational biology, design, drama, music, gaming, and game design, and writing and culture. They also offer the following programs at no-cost; computer science, summer academy for math and science, and an artificial intelligence program called AI4ALL.

Pitt, in partnership with [Pitt Information Technology will host the Air Force Association CyberCamp](#) June 24-28, 2024. This week-long program is free and open to high school students and teaches cybersecurity principles, skills, and future career opportunities.

[Bucknell Academy Summer Experience \(BASE\)](#) is a collaborative residential experience where students are invited to explore the value of a liberal arts perspective in making challenging decisions to improve today's world. At BASE, students will experience interdisciplinary study from top tier professors while challenging their thought processes. This year's theme is To Share or Not to Share: How has social media impacted society and what can we learn from it?

When: June 23-28, 2024

Who: Rising juniors and seniors in high school are welcome to apply

[The West Point Summer Leader Experience \(SLE\)](#) provides rising high school seniors with a week-long immersion into the academic, military and social life of a cadet. At SLE you'll explore West Point from all angles, including the high-tech facilities, team building athletic activities, and realistic military training. You will get a taste of Cadet life throughout the program, which is led by current West Point cadets.

[Duquesne University Summer STEM Camp](#) will take place in June on the campus of Duquesne University and is designed for rising sophomores, juniors, and senior high school students from the local Pittsburgh area schools that have demonstrated a strong interest in science. We would like to expose high school students from populations underrepresented in science, via an immersive, diverse, hands-on learning experience.

[Joy of Coding through University of Michigan](#) is an online course specially created for anyone who wants to experience first-hand the power and thrill of coding computers to do amazing things. Created with high school students in mind, it is a great way for anyone to step into the wondrous world of coding. Using Python, students will learn how coding powers apps such as Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram and Siri, and even learn how to code their own versions of Snapchat lenses. Program runs June 21-August 2 and students can anticipate to spend 4-6 hours per week. The program costs \$125 and need-based financial aid is available.

[2023 STEM Summer Camp Scholarship](#) – gives high school females up to \$750 in scholarships to attend a STEM focused summer camp. You find the summer camp and include that information in the application.

Financial Aid Programs:

PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Association) is offering various virtual statewide webinars that are open to any student/family here: <https://www.pheaa.org/virtual/index.shtml>. A few of these webinars are listed below. Register for these webinars at <https://www.pheaa.org/virtual/index.shtml>. All workshops take place from 6 – 7 p.m.

FINANCIAL AID JUNIOR JUMPSTART

Wednesday, May 8

Join us for an exciting session tailored to high school juniors that will inspire them to take charge of their future! This session is all about empowering students to plan and set goals, setting the stage for a successful senior year. We'll equip them with invaluable insights into navigating the financial aid process, ensuring they're well-prepared to tackle the challenges that await. But that's not all—this session is open to both students and their parents who are exploring various postsecondary education options. It's an opportunity for families to gain a deeper understanding of what lies ahead and how to make the most of it. With valuable information and expert guidance, everyone involved is bound to benefit immensely from this session.