

# 4-year College Exploration, Application, and Planning Guideline

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*Every student is a unique individual, and therefore, that is how we approach the college exploration and application process here at The Gregory School. This 4-year timeline should be viewed as a guideline, not a step-by-step checklist to be completed by all students. Every young person has specific post-high school education and career interests, and through the partnership and encouragement of the College Counseling Center, faculty, staff and parents, each student will most certainly find success.*

**Michelle Borleske M.A.C., M.A.**

Director of College Counseling, The Gregory School

Phone: 520.327.6395

Fax: 520.327.8276

[mborleske@gregoryschool.org](mailto:mborleske@gregoryschool.org)

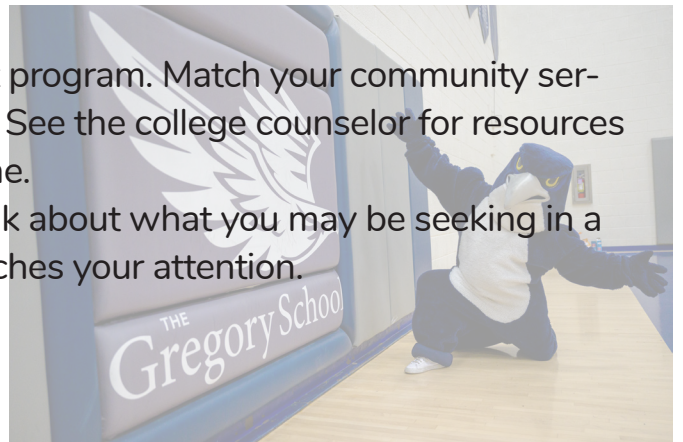
# Freshman Year

## First Semester:

- Enroll in appropriate and challenging level courses. Explore interesting electives that are academically appropriate. Leave time for study hall if needed.
- Develop solid academic and time management skills because freshman grades are the foundation of your upper school grade point average.
- Develop problem-solving skills, and learn to communicate proactively and effectively with teachers. Learn how to be an engaged student.
- Explore co-curricular clubs, activities, sports and service opportunities. Begin to uncover your personal interests.
- Take the 9th-grade CWRA assessment when offered at TGS. Complete career interest inventories with the college counselor during Friday Explorations or online. Look into careers that catch your attention.
- Enjoy being in high school - attend sporting events, musical and theatre events, school dances and time with family and friends. Down-time and self-care is important for your personal well-being.

## Second Semester/Summer:

- Consult the college counselor regarding next year's class options, and discuss a 4-year plan. Have registration and course selection forms signed as required.
- Consider taking AP or advanced level courses as appropriate for your academic preparedness and time commitment to studying material in-depth.
- Create a resume noting your Semester 1 activities, involvements, honors, awards, etc. You'll build upon this every semester for use in senior year.
- Receive an estimate of your financial aid award using the online "FAFSA4caster" at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/estimate> if you're starting to prepare for affording college expenses.
- Consider participating in a summer enrichment program. Match your community service to potential academic and career interests. See the college counselor for resources or search "summer pre-college programs" online.
- Explore colleges online from time-to-time. Think about what you may be seeking in a college experience, and make note of what catches your attention.



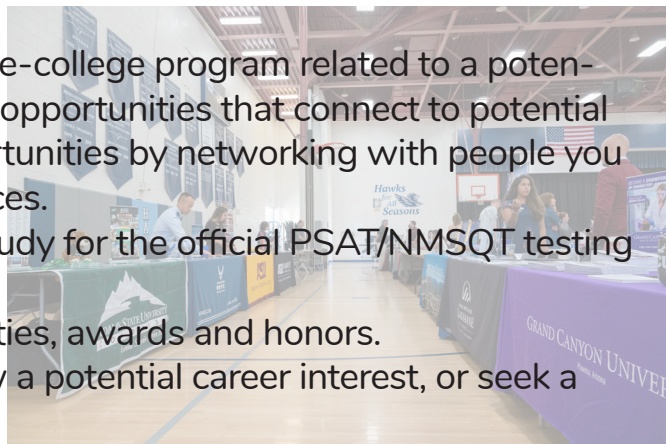
# Sophomore Year

## First Semester:

- Enroll in courses that are interesting yet appropriately rigorous and challenging. This is also the year to branch out and try new electives.
- Maintain academic success from freshman year, or develop a plan to improve your skill-set where needed. Set goals for yourself.
- Seek tutoring or support for challenging courses if needed.
- Continue to research colleges and specific academic majors or degrees on college websites. Research “Colleges with majors in.....” for ideas.
- Try something new to expand your horizons or continue to enhance areas of specialization. Become an active member of a student organization, athletic team or community program.
- Earn community service hours on a regular basis. Research organizations that reflect your personal or potential career interests.
- Utilize major and career exploration/assessment tools during scheduled explorations or online. Meet with the college counselor to discuss your ideas and ways to gain insight and experience, or network with local professionals.

## Second Semester/Summer:

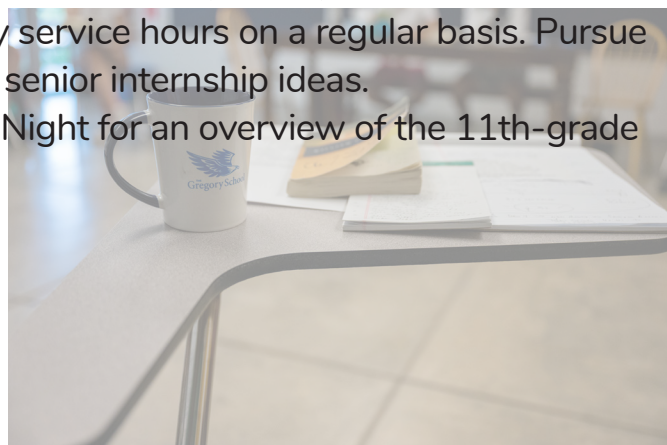
- Consult with the college counselor regarding Junior year course selection as 11th grade is a highly evaluated term on your academic record. Have all registration forms signed as required.
- Select AP courses as appropriate for your academic preparedness and interest in the subject material.
- Enhance your college exploration by attending online admissions sessions, open houses and college fairs. Consider on-campus college visits to explore and get a hands-on feel for the various campus environments as you're able.
- Take the school day pre-ACT and PSAT 10 which are automatically scheduled for the TGS Sophomore class. These tests provide you with benchmark measurements for core academic areas.
- Consider attending a summer enrichment or pre-college program related to a potential subject of interest. Find community service opportunities that connect to potential career interests. Create your own unique opportunities by networking with people you know, and through the wealth of online resources.
- Research PSAT prep programs or begin self-study for the official PSAT/NMSQT testing held in the fall of junior year.
- Update your list of activities/resume with activities, awards and honors.
- Attend a focused pre-college program, shadow a potential career interest, or seek a part-time employment opportunity.



# Junior Year

## First Semester:

- This is the time to reflect, assess and challenge yourself in preparation for your post-high school goals. Enroll in appropriately rigorous courses including AP, Dual Enrollment or advanced level classes as appropriate, as well as classes that expand your interests.
- Maintain or enhance your level of academic success. Junior grades are often the last grades colleges see prior to early admissions decisions.
- Attend college admissions rep online or in-person visits for TGS. Connect with our assigned regional college admissions representative to develop a working relationship and create a face-to-that-name recognition.
- Tour college campuses online or in-person. Attend college information nights and college fairs, and begin developing your educated list of potential options based on academic preparedness, personal fit, affordability, etc.
- Explore GAP year programs if you're not planning to attend college immediately after graduation, or research military options if interested.
- Meet with the college counselor to discuss your career interests, job ideas and ways to gain insight and experience. Utilize major and career exploration/assessment tools during scheduled explorations or online.
- Take the official PSAT/NMSQT, scheduled for all TGS 11th graders, which determines National Merit qualification and provides insight into your SAT strengths and weaknesses.
- If testing is required for your colleges of interest, review dates and deadlines for the ACT or SAT, and SATII Subject Tests for the upcoming semesters.
- Attend the Financial Aid & Scholarship Information Night for insight into the FAFSA/Financial Aid, scholarships and college budgeting process for senior year.
- Demonstrate leadership within your co-curricular activities, music, athletics and community service involvements. Earn community service hours on a regular basis. Pursue roles that support your interests. Think about senior internship ideas.
- Attend the Junior-Parent College Information Night for an overview of the 11th-grade college preparation calendar.



# Junior Year

Second Semester:

- Enroll in the Junior College Seminar course as your schedule allows.
- Consult with the college counselor regarding Senior year classes. Consider AP and Advanced courses as appropriate. Have all registration forms signed as required.
- Attend the “Junior Parent Launch” presentation in preparation for the year ahead.
- If required and as you’re prepared, register and complete ACT, SAT or SATII testing.
- Create your list of colleges of interest noting the “Reach, Match, Likely” status and pros/cons. Review and discuss Early Decision & Early Action options.
- Register for the NCAA Eligibility Center if you’re considering playing a DI or DII collegiate sport. Inform the college counselor if you are being recruited.
- Use the Net Price Calculator to receive an estimate of college costs at <https://collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx>
- Develop a campus visit action plan for the semester and summer ahead.
- Attend required meetings for Senior Internship planning. Begin internship hours if prepared and approved.
- Consider requesting letters of recommendation from teachers, community members and/or employers.
- Take AP and final exams in May.
- Attend a summer pre-college/enrichment program, seek part-time employment, or create your own developmental opportunities.
- Update your list of activities/resume to include everything you’ve done in 9-11th grade.





# Senior Year

First Semester:

All TGS seniors are enrolled in the “Senior College Seminar” course, which is taught by the college counselor and meets twice a week during first semester. All of the below topics and tasks are included in the course syllabus and are worked on during that dedicated course time, and through 1-on-1 appointments.

- Ensure that your senior year course selections are appropriately rigorous and intentional. Finalize your schedule to avoid any mid-year schedule changes.
- Attend the Senior Parent Launch for updates to the application process.
- Complete your college applications through the Senior College Seminar course, working in order of priority of ED, EA or Regular deadlines.
- Apply for Honors and scholarship programs.
- Update your assigned SCOIR account regularly. Consult weekly with your college counselor regarding the progress of applications, questions and concerns.
- Take any required ACT, SAT or SAT II tests. Ensure official score reports have been sent to your colleges.
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers, community members and/or employers.
- Inquire about local admissions interview opportunities. Attend college rep visits. Tour college campuses. Attend local college information nights. Maintain those relationships!
- Begin or continue working on your senior internship hours. Update your TGS internship advisor on a regular basis and notify them of any issues if they arise.
- Attend the College Financial Aid & Scholarship Information night for detailed updates and directions for your aid application process.
- Complete the FAFSA and CSS/Profile soon after the October 1 launch.
- Put final touches on your essays and on your senior resume.
- Maintain academic success. Most colleges, even after you’ve been admitted, will request a midyear transcript/grade report to ensure you’re maintaining strong grades.
- Demonstrate leadership within your co-curricular activities, music, sports, community service and personal involvements.



# Senior Year

Second Semester:

- Submit applications with January and February deadlines, and complete outstanding Honors applications.
- Consider offers of acceptance and financial aid/scholarship awards.
- Check your email and college portal accounts frequently.
- Determine your level of interest in postponed/deferred/waitlist decisions. Write letters of continued interest and reach out to admissions contacts.
- Complete your internship, prepare the final report and internship presentation.
- Be sure to appropriately thank the writers of your recommendation letters.
- Continue researching and applying for scholarships.
- Keep note of all deposits and refund deadlines.
- **May 1 - national college deadline day. Notify your college of choice by submitting your deposits for enrollment and housing. Inform the other colleges that you're not attending.**
- Take AP and final exams.
- Graduate!! Celebrate with your family and friends!
- Attend your college orientation. Take placement tests and register for your college classes.

