

JUNIORS: Deep Dive Into The College Application Process

Robinson PTSA and Robinson Cube, March 23, 2021

Did you know...?

- There are over 4000 colleges and universities in the USA – and most of them accept the majority of applicants.
- Ways to apply:
 - 1) Common App - over 900 colleges use the Common App as an application platform, including University of Florida, FSU, USF, UCF, UNF, and most private colleges,
 - 2) Direct to Institution – many colleges have their own applications on their websites, including University of Tampa, FAMU, Georgetown, MIT, HCC, Technical colleges.
 - 3) Coalition App – over 150 colleges use Coalition App, including Rollins, UF, FSU, University of Tampa, and
 - 4) Common Black College App – 60 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) use the CBCA, which costs a total of \$20 to apply to as many of the colleges as desired.
- A note about college essays: Many colleges don't require any essay (FIU, FAU, FGCU) and some have an optional essay (UCF), and some require many essays including supplemental essays and essays to get into special programs like the Honors Colleges.
- Florida state colleges (community colleges) accept 100% of high school graduates and cost roughly \$3,000 to attend full-time per year.
- Florida state universities (4-year institutions) cost roughly \$6,000 a year in tuition, which makes Florida one of the least expensive in-state tuitions in the country.
- Adults with a bachelors degree earn 73% more per year than adults with a high school diploma.

JUNIOR TIMELINE:

March:

- Research colleges & explore scholarships that fit through Naviance and College Board. Look for colleges that are a good match for you on the basis of location, major, cost, opportunities for internships and co-ops, sports, student life, and more.
- Start an Excel spread sheet to stay organized with information about potential colleges
- Study for the SAT through linking your College Board account to Khan Academy (free); study for ACT through downloading the ACT website's study guides and practice tests (free)
- If interested in military academies start planning now for your application.

April-May:

- Attend RHS Junior Night on April 6th through Zoom.
- Take in-school SAT on April 13 and/or a Saturday SAT on May 8 OR Saturday ACT on April 17
- Complete a RHS Student Activity Report/Brag Sheet or Resume on Naviance Student

- If applying to colleges that require them, select 2 teachers to write you letters of recommendation – ask them in person, then follow up with a thank you note and the Resume you created on Naviance
- Plan summer college visits (or virtual visits).

Summer before Senior Year:

- Find a summer job, participate in internships, community service, and/or educational programs
- Re-take SAT on June 5 or Aug 28; Re-take ACT on June 12 or July 17 or Sept 11
- Sign up for an account on Common App – fill out all Common App demographic information and Activities section using your Resume you created on Naviance
- Write first draft of Common App personal essay and supplemental essays for colleges <https://www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts>. A well-respected resource for help with writing the essays is the College Essay Guy: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>

Sept – Oct of Senior Year:

- Complete college applications in September and October in order to be eligible for the highest amount of financial aid/merit scholarships
- Colleges with Rolling Admissions (many of the Florida public universities) begin accepting applications in September; chances of admission (and better chances at certain forms of financial aid) are higher the earlier you apply.
- Many Early Action and Early Decision deadlines are in October and November; check college’s websites for details. Early Action (non-binding) and Early Decision (binding) often, but not always, increase students’ chances of admission.
- University of Florida and FSU deadlines are usually at the beginning of November.
- Complete the FAFSA, the CSS Profile, and the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) in the first few weeks of October
- Apply to national scholarships for high-achieving students with deadlines in Sept & Oct.

ROBINSON HIGH SCHOOL’S NAVIANCE PROGRAM

Sign in to your **NAVIANCE** account at <http://student.naviance.com/robinsonhs> Login: Student number; Password: individually created password (10 or more characters).

If you forget your password, see (or email) Mr. Clay or your School Counselor for help resetting.

FIRST: LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF

- Go to the About Me, My Assessments tab to discover your strengths, learning style, and personality style by taking self-assessments: Strengths Explorer, Learning Style Inventory, and MI Advantage
- Go to the Careers, Explore Careers and Interests tab to clarify your long-term career goals: take these assessments Career Cluster Finder, Career Interest Profiler, and Do What You Are

- Go to the About Me, My Stuff to write your Resume, which will make it easier to apply to college when you are ready

SECOND: LEARN ABOUT COLLEGES

- Go to Colleges tab and start with SuperMatch College Search, which will help you identify colleges based on the criteria of location, your preferred major, how selective the college is, extracurricular/social activities, sports, and many other factors. Check out Scattergrams. Put your college choices into “Colleges I am Thinking About”. Another website students use to do a college search is bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges.
- Go to the websites of each of the colleges you are considering and explore their academics, student life, support programs, sports, financial aid/scholarships etc. so you can determine whether each school is a good fit for you.
- Choose a range of schools across three categories: “Safety” - your GPA and test scores are above their average; “Target” – your grades and scores are in the mid-range, and “Reach” – your grades and scores are below their average.
- Create a spreadsheet or notes on your phone to keep track of each college’s deadlines for applications and scholarships, and write down questions you may want to ask the admissions representatives when they visit Robinson High School in the fall.

THIRD: LEARN ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

- Check **Naviance Student** and **Canvas** for links to the Hillsborough County Scholarship matrix and other scholarship websites that are updated regularly.
- Recognize that “STICKER price” (cost on college’s website) is not the same as “NET price” (cost YOU will pay based on your family’s financial situation and other factors). For example, Harvard’s Tuition Sticker Price this year is \$51,925, but tuition is FREE if your family makes under \$65,000 a year. This is true for Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and several other highly selective colleges.
- Financial aid can come from the federal and state governments, colleges, private organizations, foundations, and many other sources. Research types of financial aid options on College Board at bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid.
- Learn about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) www.fafsa.gov. Registration begins October 1 of senior year (Oct 1, 2021) and it determines eligibility for federal, state, and some institutional financial aid.
- For Florida residents: review financial aid options at www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org.
- Go to each prospective college’s Financial Aid website for their available scholarships.
- Sign up to receive updated scholarship notices from fastweb.com and scholarships.com and unigo.com and careeronestop.org websites for comprehensive scholarship listings.
- Consider signing up for a Raise.Me account and register for College Board Opportunity Scholarships at <https://opportunity.collegeboard.org/>
- Read about **Bright Futures Scholarships** www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/. *Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) need a minimum of a 3.50 weighted GPA, 1330 SAT, 29 ACT and at least 100 service hours. The FAS covers 100% tuition at a Florida SUS school*

+ \$300/semester

Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) need a minimum of a 3.00 weighted GPA, 1210 SAT, 25 ACT and at least 75 service hours. The FMS covers 75% tuition at Florida SUS school.

A Sampling of National Competitive Scholarships for High-Achieving Students (not exhaustive):

1. Gates Foundation Scholarships – deadline mid-September, 2021
2. Questbridge.org – deadline late September, 2021
3. Jack Kent Cooke Foundation - deadline late October, 2021
4. Coca-Cola Scholarship – deadline late October, 2021
5. Davidson Fellows Scholarship – deadline mid-February, 2022
6. Bailey Family Foundation Scholarship – deadline late February, 2022