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COLLEGE SENSE FOR SOPHOMORES
UNCW

Ten Tips for High School Sophomores Planning for College

- 1** Do what you love and do it to the best of your ability. Don't be afraid to try new things. Avoid getting involved in activities on a superficial level only to build a resume. Colleges look for genuine enthusiasm, commitment and evidence of leadership.
- 2** Take the most academically challenging program available in your areas of interest. Meet with your teachers and guidance counselor to determine what course levels are best for you.
- 3** Make the most of what your school has to offer. Develop a relationship with your guidance counselor early in high school. Your counselor is a valuable resource for information about college choices, the admissions process, financial aid and potential career options.
- 4** Choose a foreign language and study it in-depth. Most colleges expect to see three years of language study and give preference to applicants with four or five years. Proficiency in another language is also a tremendous advantage in the job market.
- 5** Read as much as you can for your own enjoyment and personal enrichment. Reading expands your world, ignites your imagination and challenges your intellect. Those who consistently read tend to score higher on standardized tests than those who take test preparation courses. If you are looking for reading suggestions, ask an English teacher, a librarian or visit your local bookstore. Some colleges also publish a "Recommended Reading List" for high school students.
- 6** Strike a balance between your academic and extracurricular commitments. Although high school is a wonderful time to explore new things, focus on those things that are meaningful for you. While some students can successfully juggle classes and significant involvement in athletics, the arts, community, or a job, it is important to have downtime to avoid burnout.
- 7** Keep your college options broad by taking college preparatory programs that minimally include: four years of English, three of social science, three of a laboratory science, three years of foreign language, three years of mathematics; and, if your schedule allows, electives in computer science and the arts. State university systems and your schools of choice have preferred curriculums.
- 8** Keep an open mind about what constitutes a "good" college. There is an important difference between what makes a college popular and what makes it excellent. Seek a wide range of opinions from people who you respect. If you are thinking of an advanced degree (doctor, lawyer, etc.), seek advice regarding undergraduate programs from people in those fields.
- 9** Begin thinking about college now. Researching and visiting colleges takes time, so plan ahead. There is no substitute for a campus visit to determine if a college is a good "fit" for you. Almost all schools offer general information sessions and campus tours. Small colleges tend to encourage personal interviews that may not be offered at larger institutions. An unhurried and planned approach to the college search will allow you to make a more educated and confident college choice as a high school senior.
- 10** Learn as much as you can about yourself. What are your talents? What activities are most meaningful to you? What classes do you find most interesting? What careers might you like to explore? Once you've answered those questions, you can begin to research and evaluate your college options.



University of North Carolina System Minimum Course Requirements

The Board of Governors of the State of North Carolina has established the following requirements for entrance to the University of North Carolina Wilmington or any other institution in the UNC system. Admission to many UNC schools is competitive; most successful applicants have exceeded these minimum course requirements.

Six course units in language, including:

- Four units in English, emphasizing grammar, composition and literature, and
- Two units of the same foreign language

Four course units of mathematics, in any of the following combinations:

- Algebra I and II, geometry and one unit for which algebra II is a prerequisite,
- Algebra I and II and two units beyond algebra II, or
- Integrated math I, II and III and one unit beyond integrated math III

Three course units in science, which include:

- At least one unit in a life or biological science (for example, biology),
- At least one unit in physical science (for example, earth science, chemistry or physics), and
- At least one laboratory course

Two course units in social science, which includes:

- One unit in U.S. history

Other minimum requirements include:

- Graduation from an accredited secondary school, and
- Submission of SAT or ACT results, including the writing section

In addition to these minimum requirements, the UNCW admissions committee will consider:

- Difficulty of coursework taken (advanced, college prep, honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, etc.)
- Grades, grade point average and/or class rank (if provided)
- Recommendation(s) from guidance counselor or core academic teacher
- Extracurricular or community activities, talents, interests, work and/or life experience
- Required essays



Admission to Selective Colleges What Counts Most

- The single most important factor in evaluating your readiness for college level work is the quality of your high school curriculum and its level of difficulty. Colleges make careful note of honors, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and look for students who have exceeded their high school's minimum requirements for graduation in as many disciplines as possible.
- Most colleges will ask you to submit the results of at least one standardized college entrance exam. Some require additional testing. These requirements may include the following exam results: SAT, SAT II tests in specific subject areas, ACT or Advanced Placement. International students from non-English speaking countries may be required to submit results of a recent TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam. Some colleges accept a wide range of test scores. A growing number of colleges are test optional. The University of North Carolina Wilmington requires applicants to submit their results of the SAT or the ACT, including the writing portion. (The new SAT includes a writing component, while the ACT offers an optional writing section for which you must register in advance.)
- All colleges seek students who will be an asset to their student body. Extracurricular achievement, leadership and involvement in areas such as athletics, arts and community service can make a candidate stand out in an applicant pool. This is one area where finding the right college match is especially important. For example, if you want to play a college sport, it will be relevant only at colleges that offer a competitive athletic program in your sport. Be sure the colleges you're interested in offer the academic and extracurricular opportunities you want to pursue.
- Admissions committees are looking for students who can express themselves clearly and effectively in writing. The committee will carefully review your essays for good grammar, thoughtful content and authenticity. (Do your own work!) Essays help the colleges get to know you more fully, so write about something that is especially meaningful to you.



Dear Student:

- The academic major(s) you are considering may have an influence on a college's interest in you. Every university has unique academic offerings and programs. Look at schools that are a good match for your educational goals.
- Your level of expressed interest in the college can be another important factor in the admission process. Visit the campus, arrange a personal interview (it may be required), contact faculty members in departments that interest you, meet with admission representatives, attend open houses or regional receptions, and correspond with coaches or admission representatives when appropriate.
- Depending upon a college's mission and priorities, ethnic and/or geographic diversity, male/female ratios, balanced enrollment in majors and students with unique talents and abilities can influence the selection process.
- Who you are as a "whole" person strongly influences the selection process. That is why recommendations from teachers, guidance counselors and others, the values reflected in your essay, your interest in community involvement, your capacity for leadership, and your ability to get along well with others are very important facets of who you are that need to be communicated.
- Colleges expect parents and students to make every effort to contribute to the cost of higher education. Start saving for college as early as possible. Take the time to research each college's financial aid policies and scholarship opportunities that might be available to you. College Web sites offer a great deal of useful information about the financial aid process and scholarships offered by the college or by outside sources.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington has produced this brochure especially for you, a talented high school sophomore. We share the growing national concern regarding the stress and pressure surrounding the selective college admission process and its effect on you early in your high school career. You should be able to flourish and grow as a high school student and community member without your every thought turning to how your performance and interests might be perceived by a college admission committee.

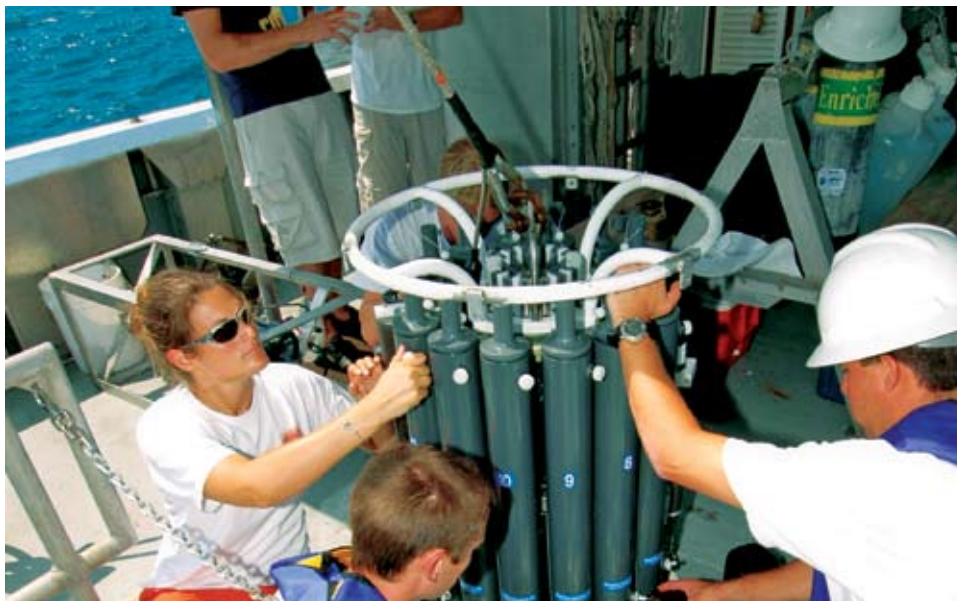
There is a thoughtful and sane way to manage your high school years without ignoring the approaching college process. We are confident the advice we have solicited from a highly respected, experienced college counselor can help you. Keep this brochure as a resource to remind you of what is really important.

When the time is right to begin your research on top-ranked colleges or universities that will best match your talents, abilities, and interests, please keep UNCW in mind. Feel free to visit our Web site, www.uncw.edu/admissions, to learn more.

Our very best to you throughout your high school career,



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Acknowledgement: *College Sense for Sophomores* was written by Laurie Ernst of Longmeadow, MA. Laurie earned a B.A. at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, and an Ed.M. at Smith College, Northampton, MA. She is a 27 year veteran of the college counseling and admission fields.