

College Planning Guide



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SECTION I Your Senior Year of High School

Your senior year is going to be very busy. You will be finishing your high school work, applying to colleges, and applying for scholarships and financial aid. You will have a lot to do, but if you work hard this year, and complete each of the tasks below when suggested, you can do it!

Keep this handbook throughout the year. Check off each task as you complete it.

JUNE/SUMMER

- Meet with your high school counselor to make sure you are on track for graduation. Arrange to make-up any missing credits during the summer or **EARLY** in the school year at a Community College or Adult School.
- Summer program
 - Finalize college list
 - Register for www.CSUMentor.com and complete High School Planner
- Start Personal Statement
 - Print them, and
 - Save them on your email, and
 - Save them on a jump drive.
- Study for the SAT/ACT
 - Review your scores and aim to raise them in the Fall
 - Register for the Fall SAT exam in October or December

FALL SEMESTER

- Review your transcript with your high schools and UB Counselors. Are there classes you still need to take to be college ready?
- Register for the SAT & ACT– check with UB Counselor high school counselor for fee waivers. **Remember that December is the last time seniors can take the SAT & ACT.**
- Consider taking community college courses if you have early dismissal.
- Check application deadlines for the colleges and scholarships to which you plan to apply.
 - Some colleges require early submission of admission applications for merit or need-based scholarships.

OCTOBER

- Cal State Application opens

NOVEMBER

- Complete college applications – apply to **at least four** UC and CSU institutions:
- Request that your high school transcripts be sent to all institutions to which you are applying.
- Apply for scholarships BEFORE application deadlines.
- Identify “nominator” and “recommenders” for the Gates Millennium Scholarship.
- Apply for the Dell Scholarship application available at <http://www.dellscholars.org/public/>

DECEMBER

- Apply for the Gates Millennium Scholarship– deadline early January – apply now.
- Send SAT & ACT scores to colleges after you receive your final December scores.

JANUARY

- Ask your parents to complete their 2010 IRS tax forms as early as possible – your financial aid for college depends on it!
- Request a US Department of Education PIN number for the FAFSA.
 - You will have the option to get your PIN # immediately by email.
 - WRITE IT DOWN and keep in it a safe place. If emailed, it will not stay in your email.
- Your parents will also need a PIN to sign the FAFSA (www.pin.ed.gov).
- File the FAFSA January 1-March 2 to meet the Financial Aid File Completion deadline for Fall Semester.
 - Early submission of the FAFSA improves your chances of receiving financial aid and scholarships.

FEBRUARY

- College specific scholarships are often due in early spring. Check with each campus for specific deadlines.

- The UC Application also serves as the UC scholarship application, so no additional application is necessary.

Attend a FAFSA/financial aid workshop with your parents through CEF at your church or at your high school. You can also check www.icanaffordcollege.com and they have listings of financial aid workshops throughout Southern California.

MARCH

- Cal Grant Applications are due **March 2**.
- UC decisions will be e-mailed to students March 1st-31st. CSU decision notifications will vary.

APRIL/MAY

- AP Exams
- Apply for campus housing if you plan to live in the dorms.
- Financial aid and scholarship award letters will begin to arrive in April. Read aid award letters carefully and be sure to *meet deadlines in order to receive award*.
- Sign commitment forms and send enrollment fees (if applicable) to the college you choose.

JUNE

- Graduation!!! Congratulations!!!



SECTION II

Applying to College

Finding the “Right” College

The purpose of this packet is to reduce stress and anxiety over the college admission process. If you understand the process, you will feel better prepared to research and apply for the schools of your choice. If you know what you are supposed to do and how to do it— you can face the task with confidence.

First, the goal is to find the right school for you. Your goal is not to gain admission to the most academically grueling institution in America; it is to find a school where you can grow, learn, and succeed— a school where your special talents and interests will be appreciated and cultivated. You will make your choices with information from a wide range of sources:

- Guidebooks
- Catalogs, websites, and flyers from the colleges
- Reputation, word of mouth, media coverage
- Alumni and other applicants from your high school
- Counselors, teachers, and other professionals
- College representatives at your high school
- Campus visits and interviews

A close look at the admission process may help, too. Colleges are not looking for one type of student. They are trying to put together a diverse community. Their goal is remarkably similar to yours: to find a successful match of school and student. It is interesting to compare the way you choose a school with the way the college chooses a student. The college relies on a much more focused set of resources:

- Grades, class rank, and GPA
- Course of study (course load, APs, Honors, etc)
- Test scores (SAT& ACT)
- Biographical data (summer activities, jobs, special interests, community service, background)
- Recommendations
- One or more essays

Each of these elements contributes to the “big picture” (YOU) that colleges will examine and consider. Of course, the evaluation process is different at every school; every college makes decisions its own way. Generally though, the admissions committee is made up of a group of individuals given the task to read hundreds, sometimes thousands of applications. It is up to you to make your application stand apart from the rest by making it personal and adding your

own creativity. Many things are considered when compiling a new freshman class and different elements make up the admission committee's final decisions.

Attractive Qualities: What Colleges Find Attractive

Before you start, you must select colleges. With your colleges list, you will want to brainstorm the qualities specific colleges find attractive.

- **Strong GPAs/Test Scores:** Admissions officers look at grades before anything else. If your grades are low compared to the applicant pool, you better write an incredibly moving and memorable essay.
 - **Fitting the Colleges Needs & Involvement:** It is very important to convince the college that you will contribute meaningfully to the campus during your 4-5 years and that you won't drop out. Colleges are looking for people to contribute to campus organizations, be classroom stars, or be sports stars—the key word is **active**.
 - **Selflessness:** Admissions officers find selfless people attractive because they tend to volunteer when they are in school and may give alumni donations once they graduate. Also, admissions officers are people; no one enjoys reading an essay that is arrogant.
 - **Depth:** Admissions officers want evidence that you have accomplished substantial achievements outside the classroom, not that you've just occasionally attended meetings.
 - **Breadth:** Depth is ultimately more important, but if you are a true Renaissance person, that's even better.
 - **Consistency:** Your application should not have any weak links, but if it does (low GPA or low test scores), your personal statement and teacher recommendations must emphasize why you will excel at your selected college. Select teachers who know you well and will write about your best qualities.
 - **Extracurricular and Community Involvement:** You want to emphasize that you will be a mover and a shaker on campus. You want to convince the admissions office that you will leave your mark on the college campus and community.
 - **Personality Traits:** The following are viewed favorably by most colleges: academic ability, athletic ability, honesty, community involvement, creativity, responsibility, goal-orientation, curiosity, sense of humor, love for family/friends, commitment, perseverance, leadership, empathy, listening ability, love for life, love of nature, career-orientation, a history of success.
 - **Special gifts and abilities:** Colleges are not just looking for well-rounded students. No one can do everything perfectly well. Schools are more interested in creating a well-rounded class. Your job is to show how you can help to create that class with your distinctive talents.
 - **Well-done applications:** Committees are looking for the story behind the story. They have a skeletal picture of you through grades, test scores and recommendations. How
-
-

you complete your application will make you stand out. Aim for an enthusiastic, articulate, genuine, and reflective presentation of yourself.

The Bottom Line: You will be compared to other students with similar backgrounds. You want to stand out within a category. Categories are based on gender, race, anticipated major, alumni connections, athletic ability, etc.

Personal Characteristics Audit: Looking at You

Answer the following questions. Review and update your answers periodically.

1. Make a list of five adjectives you feel your friends/peers and teachers/counselors would use to describe you:

Friends/Peers	Teachers/Counselors
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____

2. Make a list of the five adjectives you would use to describe yourself:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

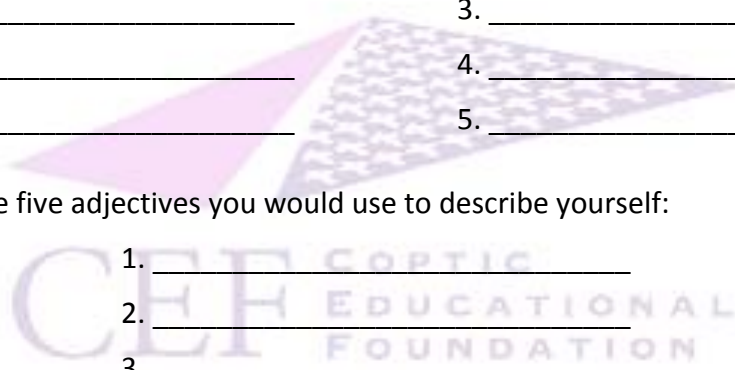
3. What are your greatest personal strengths or attributes?

4. What are your greatest weaknesses or shortcomings?

5. List three academic subjects or interests you would like to continue to study:

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

6. Which high school courses have you enjoyed the most?



7. Which high school courses have been the most difficult?

8. Identify a recent experience that stimulated your intellectual curiosity:

9. How would you describe your academic performance to date? Is your high school record a true reflection of your academic ability and potential? If not, how would you characterize your ability and potential to succeed in college?

Setting Educational and Career Goals

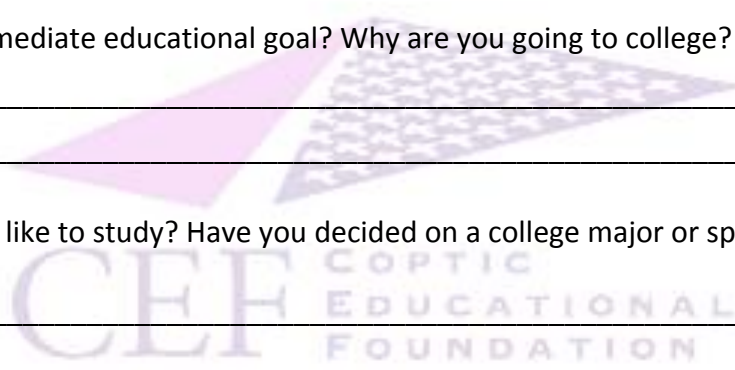
1. What is your immediate educational goal? Why are you going to college?

2. What would you like to study? Have you decided on a college major or specific program of study?

3. What is your eventual educational goal (ex: Bachelor's degree, Masters degree)?

4. Have you set a career goal or identified a field (ex: business, communication, health) in which you would like to work? If yes, what is that occupation or field?

5. What do you consider to be your strongest academic (ex: writing, computation, analytical) skills? To what extent do you wish to pursue collegiate studies related to these skills?



Narrowing Choices: Deciding Where to Apply

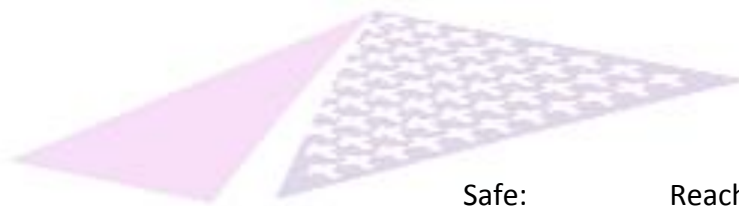
Insert names of the colleges (in any order) that you continue to consider below. To the right, offer an appraisal as to whether the college is a “safe” or a “reach” school. A “safe” school is one that has a history of admitting students with your kind of academic and personal credentials. A “reach” school suggests that your qualifications are more borderline and the competition for admission is greater.

Don’t create a list made up entirely of “reach” schools. Finally, list three or more characteristics (ex: strong journalism school, friendly atmosphere, affordable, etc) that have impressed you about the college. These characteristics should be influential in your final decisions.

College: _____ Safe: _____ Reach: _____

Characteristics of the college that impressed me during the search process:

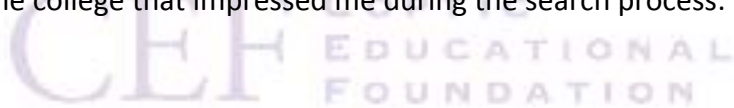
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



College: _____ Safe: _____ Reach: _____

Characteristics of the college that impressed me during the search process:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



College: _____ Safe: _____ Reach: _____

Characteristics of the college that impressed me during the search process:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

College: _____ Safe: _____ Reach: _____

Characteristics of the college that impressed me during the search process:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Once you have completed the exercise above, review the list and the characteristics you have identified for each college. Next rank the colleges (1 through?) in the order of personal preference.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



Note:

- Complete college applications – apply to **at least four** UC **and** CSU institutions.
 - DO NOT apply to a school you wouldn't actually attend.
- Arrange to pay for application fees. Fees can cost anywhere from \$20-\$100 each.
 - When applying to UCs and CSUs the online application will ask if you want to apply for a fee waiver. If eligible, you may receive up to **four** UC and **four** CSU application fee waivers.
- Request that your high school transcripts be sent to all institutions to which you are applyin



SECTION III

SAT & ACT Tests

Either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is required for admission to most colleges and Universities in the U.S. Most institutions in California prefer the SAT but will accept the ACT.



If you are applying to colleges outside the state of California, check that institution's web site to find out which test you need to take.

Some universities have a *minimum SAT or ACT* score required for admission. Students are encouraged to take the SAT or ACT as early in the school year as possible, so if you need to retake the test, you can. Most schools will use your highest score for admissions.

In addition, many scholarships consider the SAT or ACT when determining awards. Keep in mind that you should have taken and received your test scores prior to applying for these scholarships.

SAT & ACT fee waivers may be available from your high school counselor. A student may receive **only two** fee waivers per test, regardless of the source of the waiver. If you choose to take the test more than twice, you will need to pay for it. For the SAT Program, fee waivers are good for two SAT Reasoning Tests and two SAT Subject Test Sitzings (students may take up to 3 tests per sitting).

Once you receive your scores you must meet with your counselor to discuss when you should retake the test and develop a study plan to improve your scores.

Test dates and SAT & ACT code numbers you need are on the following page. Other code numbers are available online at the SAT (www.collegeboard.com) & ACT (www.actstudent.org) websites.



Code Numbers and Score Reports

Institution	SAT	ACT
California State University	3594 (CSU Mentor code, sends scores to ALL CSUs applied to)	Send to any 1 CSU and then release the scores through ACT Scores Manager on actstudent.org
University of California	Send to 1 UC that you WILL ABSOLUTELY apply to and the other UCs will be able to see your scores. However, official scores must be sent in May if you end up attending a UC that scores were not originally sent to.	Send to 1 UC that you WILL ABSOLUTELY apply to and the other UCs will be able to see your scores. However, official scores must be sent in May if you end up attending a UC that scores were not originally sent to.

SAT Test Dates

Test Date	Test	Regular Registration Deadline (postmark/submit by)
October 9, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests	September 10, 2010
November 6, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests	October 8, 2010
December 4, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests	November 5, 2010

ACT Test Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (late fee required)
September 11, 2010	August 6, 2010	August 7 – 20, 2010
October 23, 2010	September 17, 2010	September 18 – October 1, 2010
December 11, 2010	November 5, 2010	November 6 – 19, 2010

SECTION IV

Financing Your College Education



College can be expensive, so the earlier you begin to plan and save for college, the better off you will be. **Lack of money, is not an excuse for not going to college.** There are several ways to gain financial help for college.

How to Apply: Most financial aid programs and many scholarships require that you complete the FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA is how your “financial need” is determined. **Plan early and apply on time!**

Financial Aid:

There are several types and sources of financial aid. Financial aid is based on **financial need**. A student must be admitted and matriculated (enrolled) in a degree-granting program to receive financial aid and must be making **satisfactory progress** toward a degree, **including maintaining a minimum GPA**, to keep financial aid. There are three primary types of financial aid:

Need Based Grants

Need Based Grants are awarded by the federal or state government or the college to which you are applying. Need based grants are based on family income. To qualify, you must show that you and your family do not have the financial resources to pay for your education. Most grants require that the students maintain adequate academic progress. **Grants do not have to be repaid.**

Work Study Programs

Work Study Programs provide award funds that are earned through part-time employment. Awards vary depending on a student’s EFC but are typically about \$3,000 per year.

Student Loans

Student Loans are available from colleges, banks, and credit unions. Depending on family income, the interest on student loans may be subsidized (partially paid) by the federal government as long as you remain in school. **Loans must be repaid**, although it may not be necessary to begin re-paying as long as you remain in school. Repayment is usually scheduled over 10 years and payments start 6 months after college graduation.

Scholarships:

Scholarships are offered by colleges, businesses, foundations and other private organizations. Scholarships vary in amount from just a few hundred dollars to a “full-ride” – meaning almost all college expenses such as tuition, books, housing, etc. **Scholarships do not have to be repaid.** Some scholarships are “renewable” each year. Most scholarships require that students maintain a certain GPA or meet other criteria in order to keep the scholarship.

Students should apply for all scholarships for which they are eligible. Several small scholarships can be just as helpful as one large one.

There are two basic types of scholarships:

Merit Scholarships

Merit Scholarships are available to students who excel in one or more areas. For example, students who have very high GPAs, ACT or SAT scores, or who have demonstrated strong leadership potential, or those who have excelled in sports, music, or an academic area are good candidates for a merit scholarship.

Need-based Scholarships

Need-based Scholarships are available to students who face or have overcome particular challenges. For example, there are scholarships for students with disabilities, scholarships for students of low-income families, scholarships for students for specific ethnic or racial backgrounds, etc. Even though the primary purpose is to assist students with financial need, merit, academic achievement and other factors, are usually considered.



The FAFSA

FREE Application for Federal Student Aid

The FAFSA is the first step in the financial aid process. You use it to apply for federal student financial aid, such as grants, loans and work-study. In addition, most states and schools use information from the FAFSA to award non-federal aid.

Federal Student Aid (FSA) uses the data on your FAFSA to calculate an ***Expected Family Contribution (EFC)***. The EFC is an indicator of your family's financial strength to pay for education after high school. Your school will subtract your EFC from your total cost of attendance. The result is your financial need. The EFC is not the amount of money that your family must provide. Rather, you should think of the EFC as an index that colleges use to determine how much financial aid (grants, loans, or work-study) you would receive if you were to attend their school.

There are three ways to complete a FAFSA:

- Online (FAFSA on the Web) at www.fafsa.ed.gov (recommended)
- PDF FAFSA (download file) at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov
- Paper FAFSA (request a copy by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID)

Using a Federal Student Aid PIN to sign your application (recommended)

You and your parents are encouraged to apply for a Federal Student Aid PIN to sign your online application before filling out your FAFSA. For a dependent student, at least one parent whose information is provided on the application must sign. Your PIN will serve as an identifier and as your electronic signature. It works much like the personal identification number you get from your bank. You can apply for a PIN from within FAFSA on the Web or at the Federal Student Aid PIN Web site at www.pin.ed.gov.

Documents Needed to Complete the FAFSA

- Social Security Number
 - Driver's license (if any)
 - W-2 Forms or records of money earned
 - Federal Income Tax Return
 - Parents' Federal Income Tax Return
 - Untaxed income records
 - Current bank statements
 - Current business and investment information
 - Alien registration or permanent resident card (if you are not a US. Citizen)
-
-

How Much \$\$\$\$ Will I Need to Go to College?

Cost of attendance varies by institution.

How much financial aid and scholarships you can get is based on the institution's "Cost of Attendance" and your "Estimated Family Contribution".

Estimated family contribution (EFC)

Your EFC will be based on your family's income will determine how much your family (parents, spouse, and you) is expected to contribute to your educational costs.

The EFC is determined by filling out a form called the **Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)** form. You will fill out the FAFSA between January and March of your senior year. Upward Bound and high school counselors are available to help.

Most students file their FAFSA on-line. To give you an idea of what to expect, the *FAFSA On-The Web Worksheet for 2009-10* can be downloaded online and used for practice. The actual form that you and your parents will complete will not be available until January 1.

Estimated Cost of Attendance

Each institution sets its own tuition and other expense estimates. For **example**, the following are estimated Cost of Attendance at a California State University (CSU) and a University of California (UC) for the 2009-10 school year. The estimates are based on a "typical" student meeting the following criteria:

- California resident
- Single dependent (not married, no dependents)
- Undergraduate enrolled in two semesters of 12 credit hours, per academic year

CSU

Tuition and Mandatory Fees for 2 semesters	\$4,370-\$6,498
Books & Supplies:	\$1,734
Room/Board – on campus housing	\$7,794-\$11,970*
Transportation	\$1,300
Personal Expenses	\$3,114
TOTAL Cost of Attendance	\$18,312-\$24,616

UC

Tuition and Mandatory Fees for 2 semesters	\$9,749-\$10,095
Books & Supplies:	\$1,734
Room/Board – on campus housing	\$10,655-\$13,641*
Transportation	\$1,300
Personal Expenses	\$3,114
TOTAL Cost of Attendance	\$26,551-\$29,884

* Students meeting different criteria, such as living off campus, but not with family would have a different “cost of attendance”.

Financial Need:

Financial Need is the difference between the estimated Cost of Attendance and your EFC. For

EXAMPLE:

\$18,312 Total estimated cost to attend the college or university
\$1000 Expected family contribution (EFC – determined by your FAFSA)
\$17,312 TOTAL Need

Once the need has been determined, then the financial aid “package” can be built.

FOR EXAMPLE:

\$17,912 TOTAL Need
\$4,000 Pell Grant
\$2,600 Scholarships
\$3,000 University Grant
\$3,000 Federal Work Study
\$12,600 TOTAL Aid
\$5,312 Unmet Need
\$3,000 Perkins Loan (Subsidized)
\$2,312 Stafford/Federal Direct Loan
0 Balance

SECTION V

Scholarship Applications

⇒ Personal Information

- Name, expected major, etc.

⇒ Personal Statements and Essays: Most scholarships will require one or more of the following:

- Written *personal statement or essay* describing yourself, your goals/plans for the future, barriers you have or will need to overcome, etc. or a statement about your community service, leadership, and extracurricular activities.
- Statements or essays about topics they give you. These statements or essays may range from one paragraph to a couple of pages.
 - Make sure you address the questions they are asking.
- Resume- online templates can be found at www.aie.org/finding_a_career/

⇒ Recommendations

- Many scholarships require letters of recommendation from people that know you well in an academic setting.
 - **Do not** use family members, your old babysitter, or a friend. These are usually not good choices.
 - **Do not** get all recommendations from the same organization; get them from variety of people: a school teacher, school counselor, UB counselor, community org., etc.
- **Do not** just ask for letters of recommendation. Provide a letter of request and either your resume or an information form (see pages 23-24).
- Make sure that your recommender knows what you are applying for - what the scholarship emphasizes (e.g., leadership, academics, overcoming challenges, etc.) and when the application is due.
- When asking for a recommendation – give your recommender plenty of time (at least 2 weeks).
- Consider waiving your right to view the recommendation, colleges prefer that teachers and counselors have the ability to write candidly about a student.
- Arrange a day to pick up the recommendation and include it with your application. If the recommender is to send the letter directly, be sure to provide a pre-addressed, stamped envelope.

⇒ SAT & ACT scores and high school transcript

- Most scholarships will require that you enclose a copy of your high school transcript and your ACT or SAT scores.



COPTIC EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION- MERIT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2010

Overview:

To encourage our youth to continue their education following secondary school, the Coptic Educational Foundation is pleased to offer a Merit Achievement Award Program (MAAP) for high school seniors.

Selection is based on both academic and non-academic aspects of student achievements. The evaluation criteria for academic achievement is based on grade point average, scholastic tests score such as SAT & ACT, extra-curricular activities, educational aspirations, career goals, and an appraisal by the high school counselor. The evaluation criteria for non-academic achievement are based on community services and other aspects such as leadership, and work experience.

Number of Awards:

A minimum of ten (10) applicants will be awarded a one-time \$1,000 award applicable toward the educational expenses of four-year schools. This is a competitive award program. Not all students who apply will receive awards.

Student Eligibility:

1. Students must be graduating seniors of public or private (secondary) high schools in California.
2. Students must be an active member of one of the Coptic Orthodox Churches in Southern California.
3. Students must have demonstrated strong community involvement.
4. Students must complete "The Personal Statement" describing their plans as they relate to their educational and career objectives and long term goals.
5. Students must submit a copy of the "Letter of Admission" from the College or University they plan to attend.
6. Students must have their high school toward a copy of their transcripts.

Complete the on-line application and submit all the required documents by May 31

Awards and Selection Process

Academic Achievement, Community Involvement and Leadership:

Selection is based on academic and non-academic achievement and information demonstrating the student's participation and leadership in community service activities. The students selected must rank high in a combination of areas. Students are evaluated only on the information they provide; therefore, serious attention should be given to completing all areas of the application.

COPTIC EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION- MERIT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- CEF retains the right to change or terminate this program at any time.
- CEF is not responsible for applications lost, misplaced, or delayed through the mail or other delivery processes.
- Once submitted, the application becomes the property of CEF. All information is kept confidential.

Winners of the merit achievement award will be notified by July 31

How do I apply?

1. Carefully complete the on-line application, listing all pertinent facts relating to your personal and academic achievements.
2. Request a copy of your official transcript of grades from your school, as well as your GPA calculation and your SAT Score.
3. Request from your school counselor, advisor, teacher or supervisor who knows of your accomplishments for completion of the "Applicant Appraisal" section. Two appraisals are required.
4. Submit a copy of the "Letter of Admission" from the College or University you plan to attend.

Application

For More Information:

If you have any questions, please call Cherif Youssef at 818-807-8505 or print out application at www.copticedu.org under *Merit Achievement Award* tab.

Resume Worksheet

Name _____

Address: _____

Home Phone # _____ Cell Phone# _____

Email Address: _____

Education (High School you attend): _____

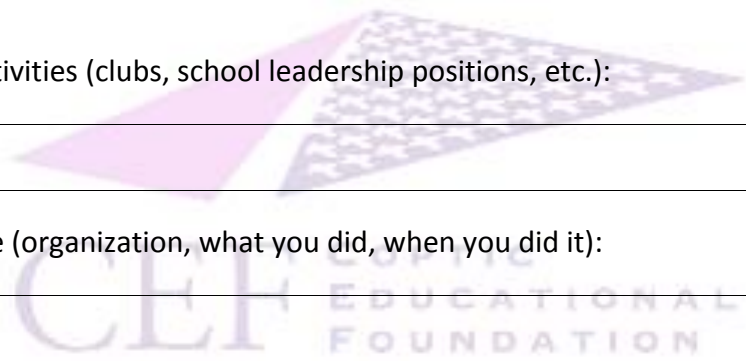
Expected graduation date: _____

Academic Honors: _____

Extra-curricular activities (clubs, school leadership positions, etc.):

Community service (organization, what you did, when you did it):

Employment/work experience (where did you work, job title, dates of employment, duties):



Sample Academic Resume

IMA STUDENT

2010 College Rd. #1
Hometown, CA 55555
ima.student@college.com
(555) 555-5555

OBJECTIVE

To obtain knowledge of the day-to-day workings of a communications, public relations, or publishing firm through a part-time job or summer internship.

EDUCATION

Completed three years at Hometown High School.
Graduation date: May 2005.
G.P.A. 3.85. Top 5% of class.

EXPERIENCE

Newspaper Staff Member, Hometown High School

- **Aug 2004 - present.** Features editor of campus newspaper.
- **Aug 2001 - Aug 2004.** Researched information for news articles using library and Web sources. Composed and edited informational articles, columns, editorials, and advertising copy.

Yearbook Committee Member, Hometown High School

- **Aug 2004 - present.** Editor-in-chief of yearbook staff. Leader of design and publication teams from initial layout through finished product.
- **Aug 2003 - Aug 2004.** Yearbook staff member. Experience taking photographs, designing layout, and writing captions and sidebars.

RELEVANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES

Technical writing; advanced composition; debate; video production; computer classes providing knowledge of word processing, desktop publishing, and Web software.

HONORS, AWARDS, AND MEMBERSHIPS

- **U.S. Media Association Scholarship recipient**
Scholarship based on academic achievement, community service, and campus participation and leadership in high school communications projects and studies.
 - **2004 Best High School Newspaper Design winner**
Central State Regional Communications Contest, sponsored by the Communications Department, State University.
 - **President of high school chapter of Future Communicators of America (FCA), 2004 - present**
Member, 2003 - present.
 - **Treasurer of National Honor Society, 2004 - present**
-

Ima Notherstudent
2010 College Way
Mytown, CA 55555
(555) 555-5555 — Ima.Notherstudent@college.com

Objective

Reliable and mature high school senior seeking a part-time retail sales position with a youth-oriented clothing environment to gain experience and insight into the fashion industry for a future career in fashion and design.

Work Experience

Country Club
Summer 2003 and 2004
Lifeguard

- Monitored swimming areas for rule violations and drowning victims.
- Assisted in maintaining pool facilities and recreation areas surrounding pool areas.
- Supervised entertainment activities sponsored by country club.
- Worked assigned shifts at check-in and concession stand.
- Attended training courses and maintained CPR certification.
- Taught summer swimming classes.

Hawkins, Robins, Warbler and Finch, Attorneys at Law
Fall 2002 - Fall 2002

- Picked-up and delivered catering and supplies for luncheons and corporate functions.
- In-house mail delivery and sorting.
- In-house document delivery.
- Office supply pick-up for local merchants.
- Assisted clerk in the law library.
- Delivered documents to and from the courthouse and other law offices.

Volunteer Work

Big Brothers/Big Sisters
2003 - 2004

- Assisted with and participated in group activities and field trips.
- Monitored youth during activities.
- Tutored ages 8-13 and assisted with homework assignments.

Texas School for the Blind
2000
Book Reader

- Read literary masterpieces into a tape recorder for use by the community.
- Assisted with volunteer office duties.

School Organizations

National Honor Society
2003, 2004
Pep Squad
2002 and 2003
Decorations Committee Chair — 2003
Senior Student Council Representative
2004
Secretary — 2004

Latin Club
2002 - 2004
Secretary — 2002
Vice President — 2004

Education

City High School
2002 - 2005
May 2005 Graduation



REQUEST FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

My Name: _____

My Phone Number: _____

Scholarship: _____

Scholarship Address: _____

Deadline: _____

I will pick up the letter

Please mail letter to the above address

Planned college major or area of study: _____

Career interests/goals: _____

Honors and Awards: _____

Club or organizations in which I have participated: _____

Community service activities: _____

Challenges or Obstacles I have overcome: _____

Other information: _____

123 Upward Bound Way
College Town, CA 55555
555-123-4567

November 15, 2008

Ms. English Teacher
College Town High School
41 South Street
College Town, CA 55555

Sample Request for Letter
of Recommendation

Dear Ms. English Teacher:

As you know, I am in the 12th grade and I am hoping to attend the University of California next year. I am applying for the XYZZ Scholarship. This scholarship is very competitive, and I need your assistance as someone who is aware of my academic abilities and community service activities.

I would appreciate it if you could write a letter of recommendation for me for this scholarship. I have enclosed a resume and an information sheet to assist you in writing my letter of recommendation. The XYZZ Scholarship has very strict rules about how to write the recommendation so I have listed the rules below:

- Each letter must be addressed "Dear XYZZ Judges"
- State how you know me and for how long
- Include your signature, address, telephone, title, and date
- Be no longer than two pages
- Be in a sealed envelope

Be specific about what you need from your recommender.

Give your recommender lots of advance notice.

I hope to complete the application process by the end of December. If possible, could you complete my recommendation by December 16? The scholarship deadline is December 31, December.

Thank your recommender.

Whether you know it or not, Ms. English Teacher, you have had a significant impact on my academic success. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ima Student

Writing the Scholarship Essay

Assignments: Use these prompts to help jump start your writing.

Sample Assignment #1: What is something unique or special about you? ½ page

- What sets you apart from others?
- What would others say are your most impressive qualities?

Assignment #2: What are your educational goals, career plans, or career interests? Even if you have not decided on a major, you should have some idea where you are going. 1 page

- What is your passion?
- What kinds of things do you like to do?
- Why are you interested in this field?
- What have you done, if anything, to prepare yourself for this field?
- What do you expect to like about this field?

Assignment #3: Describe your community service experience and why it was important. 1 page

- What community service activities have you participated in?
- If you have listed more than one community service activity, pick one – tell about your experience.
- Who did you help? How did you help?
- Connect the experience with your own life experience.
- How did you *feel* about this experience?
- What did you learn from this experience or why was it significant?

Assignment #4: Describe obstacles you have overcome or will need to overcome in order to reach your educational goals. 1 page

- Identify and describe the obstacle.
 - How, specifically has this affected you? (Or how will it affect you?)
 - Why was this or will this be an obstacle?
 - What have you done (or will you do) to overcome this obstacle?
 - What have you learned from this or how has it helped you become who you are?
 - DO NOT SAY: “I have overcome many obstacles.” Be specific.
-

Scholarship Essay Writing Tips

Adapted from: http://www.internationalstudent.com/essay_writing/scholarship_essay.shtml

Step One – Brainstorming

Scholarship essays vary dramatically in subject. However, most of them require a recounting of personal experience.

Expect to devote some time brainstorming ideas. To begin, consider the following:

1. What are your major accomplishments, and why are they accomplishments to you?
 2. Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
 3. What are your favorite books, movies, works of art, even role models? Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way?
 4. What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?
 5. Have you ever struggled to achieve something and succeeded or failed? What made you successful or, if you failed, how did you respond?
 6. Of everything in the world, what would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be? Who, of everyone living and dead, would you most like to be with? These questions should help you realize what you love most.
 7. Have you experienced a moment when your eyes were opened to something you were previously blind to?
 8. What is your strongest personality trait?
 9. How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about if they were writing your scholarship essay for you?
 10. What have you done outside of the classroom that demonstrates qualities sought after by universities? (Sports, leadership, clubs, community service, etc.) Of these, which means the most to you?
 11. What are your goals and dreams for the future? How does this particular scholarship fit into your plans for the future?
 12. While most interested in the last 2-4 years of your life, you might consider events of your childhood that inspired the interests you have today. For instance, if you experienced extreme poverty, the death of a loved one, immigration, etc., you might want to incorporate this into your scholarship essay.
 13. If you have a role model or aspire to become like someone, you may want to incorporate a discussion of that person and the traits you admire.
-

Step Two - Selecting an Essay Topic

Consider the following questions before proceeding:

1. Have you selected a topic that describes something of personal importance in your life, with which you can use vivid personal experiences as supporting details?
2. Is your topic a gimmick or are you trying to make it funny? We recommend strongly that you do not do this. Usually, this is done poorly and is not appreciated by the scholarship committee unless a creative approach is explicitly recommended.
3. Will your topic only repeat information listed elsewhere on your application? Do not mention GPAs or standardized test scores in your essay if they are mentioned elsewhere.
4. Can you fully answer the question asked of you? Elaborate on all points within specified word limit.
5. Can you keep the reader's interest from the first words? The entire essay must be interesting, scholarship officers will only spend a few minutes reading each essay.
6. Will your topic turnoff a large number of people? Stay away from specific religions, political doctrines, or controversial opinions.
7. In this vein, if you are presenting a topic that is controversial, you must acknowledge counter arguments without sounding arrogant.
8. Will a scholarship officer remember your topic after a day of reading hundreds of essays? Will the officer remember you? Make a lasting impression.

After evaluating your essay topics with the above criteria and asking for the free opinions of your teachers and friends, you should have at least 1-2 interesting essay topics. Consider the following:

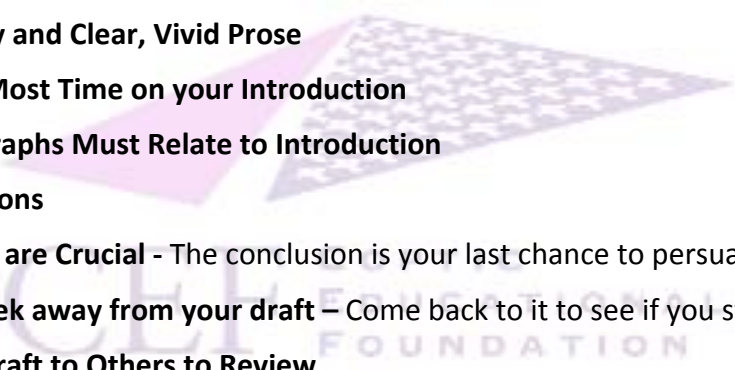
1. If you are writing an essay on how you survived or overcame a difficult situation, be careful that your main goal is to address your own personal qualities. Just because something sad or horrible happened to you does not mean that you should win a scholarship. You want to show your impressive qualities under difficult circumstances.
 2. Be careful with the word, "diversity." Many applicants are tempted to declare what makes them diverse. However, simply saying you are black or Latino or female is not enough. Address your own personal qualities and how you overcame stigma, dealt with social ostracism, as well as your motivation. Address specifically how your diversity will contribute to the realm of campus opinion, the academic environment, and the larger society.
 3. Do not mention weaknesses unless you absolutely need to. You want to make a positive first impression, and telling a scholarship officer anything about drinking, drugs, partying, etc. undermines your goal. Why admit to weakness when you can instead showcase your strengths?
-

4. Be honest. Unless you are a truly excellent writer, your best, most passionate writing will be about events that actually occurred. While you might be tempted to invent hardship, it is unnecessary. Write an essay about your life that demonstrates your personality.

Step Three - Writing the Essay, Tips for Success

Even boring topics can be made into exceptional scholarship essays with an innovative approach. Keep in mind your two goals: to persuade the scholarship officer that you are worthy of receiving college assistance and to make the officer aware that you are more than a GPA and a standardized score, that you are a real-life, intriguing personality.

1. **Answer the Question**
2. **Be Original**
3. **Be Yourself**
4. **Don't "Thesaurize" your Composition**
5. **Use Imagery and Clear, Vivid Prose**
6. **Spend the Most Time on your Introduction**
7. **Body Paragraphs Must Relate to Introduction**
8. **Use Transitions**
9. **Conclusions are Crucial** - The conclusion is your last chance to persuade the reader
10. **Spend a week away from your draft** – Come back to it to see if you still feel the same
11. **Give your Draft to Others to Review**
12. **Revise, Revise, Revise**



**EXAMPLES OF THREE “FULL-RIDE”
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Sample essays by other students who have received scholarships are included.

Gates Millennium Scholarship (any institution of higher education): Due in January.

This scholarship requires a lot of work for the applicant, nominator and the two recommenders **so you need to start early**. Please see the Gates Millennium website: www.gmsp.org

- You must be nominated for this scholarship.
- You must have two recommenders. This may take some time, so ask people who are willing to put in the time and who know you well.
- The application requires several statements such as:
 - Subjects you’ve excelled in
 - Subjects you’ve had difficulty in
 - A time you felt you or someone you know was treated unfairly
 - Your educational goals
 - Your leadership positions
 - Your community service experiences
 - Your skills and abilities
 - Your general story, (an opportunity to sell yourself and see a part of you they would not see otherwise).



SAMPLE ESSAY

Be the change you want to see in the world” -- Mahatma Gandhi

My name is [REDACTED]. I was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, and lived there until I was six years old. My family came to the United States because my parents desired for us to have a better, richer life in the United States because surviving in Mexico was really difficult due to the high rates of unemployment. One problem my family encountered as they came to the U.S. was that we did not know how to speak English. My father had to find work and we needed a home to live in as well. We moved to an apartment that had only one bedroom and eventually, my dad found a job in the apartments where we lived. He was hired as a repairman to help people with the plumbing and electricity. My parents took night classes in English at an elementary school to improve their English. My mother stayed at home and she always reminded us to eat all of our food because we could not afford expensive food; we were not rich people.

As a young student I was placed in resource classes because my English was not very good. Becoming a better English speaker is one of my life-long goals. Even though my English is not great, I do my best to learn everything I can. Math is my weakest subject. I took Algebra in the ninth grade and I struggled in the class, but was able to start to understand the subject better. The following year I took Geometry and did very well. The next year when I started taking Algebra II, I found I was again having difficulty learning the concepts. My teacher did not think I could learn the concepts and encouraged me re-take Algebra but with the help of a tutor I was able to be successful in the class. I earned a B+ and was really proud of the result. I realize that school is difficult and it's hard to succeed if you don't ask for help or look for resources to help you better understand the materials. As a college student, I know that the classes are only going to get harder but I will not let myself fail or get discouraged. I will ask for help and work hard so that I can continue to succeed academically. Although I have struggled in Math and English I have really excelled in my Art classes. I am currently taking Advanced Art and Printmaking. My teacher, Ms. Clay, has really taken to me and continues to push me forward towards college.

My mother encourages me to go to school and is constantly reminding me of how difficult it is for minorities, including Mexicans, to live in the United States. We often talk about race and diversity and how many of us don't have an opportunity to study at a university and so I should work hard to have that chance. It is important for the students of a university to learn and understand about how other cultures value education and other things. I feel proud to know that my mother believes that I can make a difference for the family and learn things that can help the people I love and others- including undocumented individuals. I have found that it is possible to be successful if you work hard enough. I made it my goal to get good grades in all my classes.

Because of my struggles in school and experiences within my family a close and honest friend might consider me determined in my schooling, a hard-worker with compassion or kindness towards others. The reason people would call me kind is because they may feel like I had saved their lives. I always do my best to help all my friends. One example of this in my life is when one of my friends was scared to go by herself to the Xerox room to have a copy made for art class. I politely said yes to her and we both went together. Additionally, when I was in eighth grade in my math class there used to be a boy everybody that picked on. There was a time when we had to be in groups in math class to play a game related to math. Of course nobody was my partner for the game and I asked this boy to become my partner, he was proud and on the second time he asked me again to become his partner in a game.

I feel my life has been one big example of my hard work and determination. In my junior year in high school I was supposed to be on a field trip for my advanced writing class. However, I had a test in physics and stayed at school to take the test. During that class period our teacher told us that we could go to the library. I of course did have homework and suggested finishing an essay for my English class and a couple of poems for my advanced writing class. Some of my friends even have the impression that I work too hard because I spend so much time in the library on my homework and after school. The librarians also complimented me that I was a hard worker.

In addition to my efforts in school I have been involved in the Chicano/Latino Club. The club offers job opportunities for Latinos and helps people learn more about the importance of attending colleges and universities and talks about classes that I can take such as photography. I am proud to represent the Latino Community because I can make a difference to other communities and in the process, have the opportunity to educate others about the issues that affect us. All of my experiences make me a great contender for this Scholarship. I believe in giving to my community, being a leader to those around me, and achieving success in whatever I set out to accomplish.

SAMPLE ESSAY

This past school year I was in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and I was appointed leader of the Partnership with Business Project for state competitions. Preparing the project was a yearlong process. It has been one of the first and biggest responsibilities I have taken on. It got stressful and hard at times but I am now very proud of the outcome and realize what a great experience it was for me.

To me, this type of project was new. When they chose me, I was really excited and ready to tear the world apart and put it back together. I am glad that I started out that way because it set a high standard I wanted to meet. I wanted everything to be perfect, but I was very inexperienced. I soon found that it takes a lot of planning, time and effort.

The project consisted of scheduling, planning and setting a partnership with many local businesses. It was very much like the type of partnerships businesses have in the "real world". Except we exchanged "goods" that were more school related. We attended a few workshops in order to prepare ourselves for a presentation in state competitions. I had the owner of a roofing company give us an entrepreneur session. A nice lady from one of our local colleges gave us a workshop on resumes, job applications and proper attire for an interview. For the last workshop, I had a few volunteers come in from our school and the University of Utah to give all the students who volunteered mock interviews.

Being juniors and in the age range of getting beginner jobs our objective was to have students, about twenty to forty, become familiar with a process that they were unfamiliar with by stepping into it. Putting the first session together was a wreck. The first workshop was the resume workshop: we had set a date we wanted it done by and everything ended up being last minute. It got done but the process was very hectic. We did not have many students show up due to lack of publicity and organization.

After the first session, the saying "You learn from your mistakes" had never been so true to me. For the next two workshops, I was much more prepared. Scheduling locations, times, and availability of our partners was much more organized and easier to put altogether. We had a lot more people show up, it was planned weeks ahead of time, and everyone knew what he or she had to do and when it had to be done. When we were through with our workshops the ride went a lot smoother because it was just preparing presentations and write-ups on our work.

I am glad I had the chance to experience such a packed project. I learned more things about myself and how I work with others, and what works best for me to get things done! I now know that I can push myself to all kinds of extremes, even though this was a small one I know I have potential of handling bigger things.

SAMPLE ESSAY

The Self-Directed Journey

I walk three blocks south of West High School and I am lost. Entering an outdoor mall I see Abercrombie and Fitch, the Gap, Hollister but where are the faithful homes labeled “this side up”, “Budweiser”, and “Fragile”? I continue down the street disoriented and unable to find the dull, dead building with endless turkey on Thanksgiving. I circle the block hoping to find the men that sell assorted balloons to over-eager adults instead I recognize the dark brown building off in the distance. Entering the building I hear children laughing. I turn to leave, then the smell bleach and destitution strikes my nostrils. I inhale deeply I am home.

I follow the laughter to my old school. My memory lapses and I cannot remember its name. Ironically, this lapse causes me to remember the school is known as the “No Name School”. I walk through the door and see active kids everywhere. . My teacher Carrie is still there zealously showing excited children about the solar system. This sight prompts me to ask “why does this school not deserve a name?” Without a proper answer I leave the building as I exit I see a sign I could not read before, it reads “The Salt Lake Homeless Shelter.” Why name the building but not the school?

Exiting I remember the mall is called “The Gateway” and I realize why the school is not named and why the building is. The latter must be named so that people walking by will know the government provides shelter for the poor, the former cannot be named because who’s name would be attached to it? A school is supposed to be a gateway but the school at the homeless shelter is not a gateway.

I think back to my time at that school and realize it never taught me what I needed to succeed. By teaching me how to add and subtract I could only calculate how much more other people had. I needed to be taught a philosophy to lead me through life, one that was not dictated by the individualistic, amoral environment of the shelter. Realizing this I chose to live in pursuit of a success defined by the realization of potential through a philosophy that emphasizes responsibility for ones actions.

My stride increases as I take the final steps back to West High School. I hear the bell ring I am late for class. When the teacher asks why I was late I do not use the excuse I was lost and confused and I almost did not find my way back, no I say “I am late because I chose to be late” She scoffs at my remark declaring “that is no excuse”; she does not know that I agree. Silently, I say to myself “Tomorrow I choose to be on time because I will not become that dilatory student. Tomorrow my name will be known.”
