

December 2023

SENIOR SEGMENTS

No. 2

Dear Parents and Students,

WHAT'S NEXT?

By now, your applications have been sent and you may have to wait until at least April to hear from your remaining prospective schools. Now is the time for you to take a second, and take an intensive look at your top few college choices. When all the results are in, this will enable you to make the best decision. Spend a few days on campus, and meet with faculty, coaches, and other students. Make your final college choice a well-informed decision. Please remember to hand in a Transcript Release Form to the Counseling Center as you continue to apply to schools.

PROTOCOL:

We want to remind you that your teachers and counselors have taken many hours out of their personal lives to write letters of recommendation for you. Take a minute to write a note to say thank you. Let them know when a college has accepted you so they can share in your joy!

STANDARDIZED TESTS:

If you choose to send standardized test scores to the colleges you are applying to, please remember that it is the student's responsibility to do so. Students should log into their College Board and/or ACT account to have scores officially sent. If schools are "test-optional", please speak with your counselor about your option to send scores.

MIDTERM GRADES:

Colleges want to see your midterm grades and will often not decide until your senior year performance has been examined. Please be aware of the fact that we will not send out the grades of any senior who owes an obligation to South Side. Also, please note that a copy of second quarter report cards is sent to every school applied to by our seniors who have no outstanding obligations.

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A number of our students procrastinate with this application that requires no essay. If you want a good choice of classes at convenient times, we urge you to apply as soon as possible.

NCAA

Athletes hoping to compete in a Division I or II sport must register with the NCAA. The process is involved and bureaucratic; you cannot wait until next year. Students occasionally decide to compete in a sport with which they were not involved in high school (i.e., ski, swim, crew, golf). The paperwork must still be completed for Division I or II schools. You can register at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Make sure you bring the Preliminary and Final Transcript Request forms to the Counseling Center.

AND...DON'T STOP WORKING! Many letters state that you have been accepted "...pending successful completion of your senior year." That usually means that you should not permit your grades to fall below your past performance.

SENIORITIS:

Note the following examples of comments from colleges in reaction to performance deterioration in senior year. Please don't let this happen to you:

University of Richmond:

We have received your final transcript and note with concern the final grade you received in Calculus. You will recall in the conditions of acceptance, which accompanied your offer of admission, that we fully expected the remainder of your work to be similar in caliber to that upon which the acceptance was being granted.

Before clearing your admission, we would appreciate you giving us some explanation as to this drop in your academic program.

Stony Brook:

Your final high school grades have been received. We note with regret that your performance in some academic subjects has declined from the level that led us to offer you admission. While it is not clear to us what has caused your academic slide, we can say with reasonable certainty that matriculation at Stony Brook will be much more difficult if your senior year level of effort is continued after you enroll.

The purpose of this letter is to alert you to our awareness of your final grades and to urge you to reflect upon the attitude and work habits during your final year in high school that produced such disappointing results. Meanwhile, in the time remaining before the first day of classes, we urge you to develop an improved outlook and re-dedicate yourself to achieving a level of performance commensurate with your ability.

University of Massachusetts:

I have recently reviewed your final high school transcript and I am disappointed to note the significant decline in your senior grades. In your acceptance letter, I reminded you that enrollment is "contingent upon successful completion of your high school graduation requirements." While you appear to have met graduation requirements, your poor senior grades need explanation before you begin a greater academic challenge at the university.

FINANCIAL AID

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available in late December and should be filled out as soon as it is open. Before it is available, you can register for your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID number by creating an account.

AP REGISTRATION

All seniors enrolled in an AP course should have received a letter from the Counseling Center regarding payment for the AP exam they will sit for in May. The cost is **\$103** per exam payable through My School Bucks and is due by January 26th.

SELECTIVE SERVICE

Males must register when they turn 18 with Selective Service either at the Post Office or by answering "yes" to the question on the FAFSA form.

HANDLING REJECTION:

As letters of acceptance and rejection are sent to applicants across the country, one can almost hear the sighs of relief from the fortunate students through the corridors of our high schools. Less obvious and more painful are the feelings of disappointment and diminished self-worth of those turned down by the colleges they had hoped to enter next fall. Counselors play an important role in helping their students in this difficult period. They can explain to their students that the competition did them in and that they are not to measure either themselves or their abilities by those rejections.

However, a greater number of adolescents are very vulnerable in their estimation of themselves right now. For many, it is the first time they have been confronted by a major disappointment. Given the importance, and thus the anxiety, that most parents attach to getting into a good college, the youngsters often feel that they have failed not themselves so much as their families. Of course, some parents will tell their children that they are being “ridiculous”. But one need only reflect on the intensity of the parents’ feelings when their son or daughter fails to win a place at “the college” to understand why applicants feel pressured to succeed. What advice can counselors give parents at this difficult time? Here are several recommendations to pass on to parents who should be, after all, the primary source of support in this time of duress. Advice for parents:

1. **Give a Hug.** State the most obvious factor of all to your child. Your love as a parent is not contingent upon acceptance to the most prestigious colleges in the land. It needs to be said. Out loud. Students often feel that the Admission Director’s letter of rejection will mean rejection at home. Keep the two issues as separate as you possibly can. It is obvious to seniors in the midst of the admissions process that their parents are enormously invested emotionally and psychologically in the success or failure of their child’s applications. Don’t allow a son or daughter to extend the failure to gain acceptance at a college as a failure of acceptance at home.
2. **Hold All Tempers.** Do not fly off the handle when the decisions come in. Don’t attack the admissions committees by labeling them stupid, unfair, prejudiced, or worse. Give your child a sense that you believe in the system and that while it has flaws, it attempts to be impartial and concerned for the best interest of both the candidate and the college. Children will deal more comfortably with the decision if they are made to feel that they did their best as a student, but that competition for precious places was simply too intense. Teenagers, with their usual sense of fair play and idealism, will feel better hearing that they were treated justly.
3. **Be Enthusiastic.** Get excited immediately over the college that your child will be attending in the fall. Talk up the many positive aspects of the institution. Best of all, visit the campus as soon as possible so that you are all comfortable with the institution. If your son or daughter is shy or hesitant about it, find a family who has a student attending that school and put him or her in touch with your child. Nothing cures anxiety better or faster than a dose of enthusiasm from a peer who is on campus.
4. **Look for Lessons.** If you feel that your child did an average to poor job in his high school work and application, let him/her know that he/she is, after all, responsible for his/her efforts. Cause and effect is one of the hardest dynamics for a youngster to learn, and certainly one of the most critical to mature into a self-sufficient adult. But do not paralyze your child by building a picture of a world filled only with permanently locked doors. Emphasize repeatedly that there is a lesson to be learned from past efforts and that the opportunity to enroll in any college will unlock the doors to a happy future. There is a tendency for adolescents to see their world hours ahead, not years. Their limited perspective about time and the opportunities in the future can cause them to give up immediately. Emphasize the chance they have to achieve and be happy in the college that accepts them.
5. **Talk to Other Parents.** Parents should speak with other parents who have sons and daughters presently enrolled in college. They are likely to hear that what parents of children already in college quickly learn is most critical of all for children. The name of the school is irrelevant if the student is overworked and overstressed, or in the wrong social environment. What continues to work best in our world of higher education is for emerging young adults to feel the success of their efforts in and out of the classroom. All the appropriate rewards and emotional strength follow automatically. If parents can understand this, then they can deal with their feelings of disappointment this month and be the active cheerleaders their children may need.

A WORD TO THE WISE:

Once a school has invited you to join its freshman class, the tables turn and the school tends to want to do anything possible to persuade you to attend. If the size of your financial aid award is a part of your decision-making process, counselors often advise that you contact the school's financial aid office again and ask them to review your financial aid application and improve the offer. Particularly if you are considering bids from comparable schools, the school may very well increase its financial aid package. Either way, you have nothing to lose by asking.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Every year there are many scholarship opportunities for all types of students. As we continue to receive them, they are posted on Naviance under the scholarships tab and they are always available for students to view in the Counseling Center.

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Please tell us when you hear from a school whether you were accepted or denied. ***Colleges expect a final transcript from South Side High School indicating graduation. As long as we know your college choice, we will automatically send your transcript.***

Once you have made a final decision on which college you plan to attend, please withdraw your applications from other schools. A place may be held for you that is keeping another student out.

We also need to gather the data for our College Book of 2024. Many of you bought our statistics book on the Class of 2023 to help you make decisions about applying to specific colleges. We hope to include you in our Class of 2024 book to help next year's group. You must notify us in writing if you **DO NOT** want to be included in the upcoming book.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ALUMNI DAY – Thursday, December 21, 2023

Representative students from the Class of 2023 will share helpful information about their first-year college experiences, making the transition to college life along with specifics about their campuses. Current seniors are invited to join our returning alumni 8th and 9th periods in the auditorium. At the start of 8th period, teachers will escort students to the auditorium for the presentation.

STAY TUNED FOR THE MARCH ISSUE ON LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS