

COUNSELOR CORNER—FOR SENIORS

SENIORS

NEMAHA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

AUGUST 2010

Items Needed: attendance sheet, newsletter, transcript, credit check, college visit sheet, senior plan sheet, senior pass, scholarship list, email list, any additional resources (i.e. ACT, March2Success, etc.)

CLASS
OF
2011

A Note from Mrs. Evans...

Planning and preparing for post-secondary life is a very exciting time. Some of you are probably nervous, asking, “Can I do this?” “What if I fail?” and “Is this the right thing for me?” Others of you are probably thinking, “I’m ready to get out of this place!” Regardless of your stance, many of you are most likely realizing that this planning and preparing phase is a rather time-consuming, sometimes exhausting task. After all, you are making decisions that will impact you for years to come. Don’t despair, though. I want to assist you in transitioning successfully into post-secondary life. Being a part of this is one of my favorite student activities, so I encourage you to visit with me and ask me questions. While YOU are ultimately in charge of YOUR future, I want to play an active role in making it become reality. At this time I want you to be aware of the following resources:

- **SOCS website** www.usd442.org. Mrs. Baker’s Web-Publishing class (a special thanks to Jamie Swart!) has been diligently working to keep the Counselor Corner current. Please visit the site or stop by my office for information related to post-secondary schools, scholarships, etc.
- **Mark your calendars now...December 13, 2010 (Monday)**, Kelly Twombly from Highland Community College will be presenting on Financial Aid starting at **6:00 PM**. Following her hour-long presentation, local scholarship information will be provided (i.e. the availability of scholarships; applying and selecting recipients of scholarships; etc.). **If you know of any providers who would like to start a scholarship, please have them contact me at 785.336.3557 or bevans@nvschools.org.**
- The **wall** around my office, the **bulletin board** on the east side of the library, and the **daily announcements** contain a wealth of information.
- **YOU**...base your decisions on what fulfills your needs. Remember, “You are the author of your own life story!” Make it a classic!

POST-SECONDARY APPLICATIONS

- A. Colleges—Make sure you apply early enough to be considered for all the school’s scholarship programs. For most schools, the present through February is early enough, but check with each school to be sure.
- B. Some technical school programs fill early—so APPLY NOW! (i.e. various Beloit programs, cosmetology, wind energy, etc.)
- C. MOST schools you apply to should have the following as part of the application process:
 - ✓ application and fee
 - ✓ transcript (request a transcript from Mrs. Evans)→DO THIS!
 - ✓ list of courses in progress (if you are a QA student)
 - ✓ ACT/SAT scores (or ASSET or COMPASS)→REMEMBER, the ACT/SAT is not for everyone!
 - ✓ scholarship application and/or essay (watch for any special deadlines)
 - ✓ Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)→available in late November/early December but can’t be filed until after January 1; NOT all schools have FAFSA; rather, they have Sallie Mae or other assistance programs
- D. Most admission and scholarship applications are available online.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- A. While a few high-level scholarships may have deadlines as early as October, November through March is the main scholarship application timeframe. Each scholarship (and each college) has a different deadline, so check each one for details.
- B. Scholarship programs use a variety of criteria in the selection process, including but not limited to:
 - Need—including family and student income and assets.

- Academics—which may include GPA, ACT/SAT scores, and/or class rank.
 - Competition—based on essays, speeches, or special tests.
 - Athletics/Activities—based on a specific ability you may have or an activity you will be involved in at college.
 - Volunteerism—what service projects you have undertaken.
- C. The selection criteria used will vary greatly from one scholarship to another. Check out each scholarship carefully and realistically evaluate your strengths. Pursue most strongly those scholarships that best match your abilities and talents.
- D. On scholarship applications, **INCLUDE EVERYTHING** pertinent from high school! (i.e. leadership, activities, honors, service, etc.) **TAKE YOUR TIME ON THIS! HAVE ANOTHER PERSON CRITIQUE YOUR WORK!**
- E. Look many places for scholarships. Civic organizations, local businesses, national corporations, and churches are just a few of the scholarship sources.
- F. Information and applications for all scholarships received by the counselor will be available in the counselor's office. A computer printout will be generated every few weeks listing the scholarship information received by the counselor; it will also be emailed to you and posted on the "Counselor Corner." Feel free to inquire at any time about scholarships.
- G. The schools you apply to may be the best source of scholarship money. An estimated 80% of the scholarships earned by Kansas students come from the schools they attend. Every college has numerous scholarships available only to its students. Often, all you have to do is complete the college's scholarship application (and apply for admission), and you will be considered for all of the scholarships administered by that college (or the ones you check that are of interest to you). Make sure you meet their admission and scholarship application deadlines. Additionally, look within college departments for scholarship opportunities.
- H. There are several computerized scholarship search services, which charge. You are advised against paying for these services since there are several scholarship search services available on the Internet that do the same thing for free.
- I. Some better-known Internet scholarship and financial aid search sites include:
- FastWeb—www.fastweb.com (database of scholarships)
 - College Answer—www.collegeanswer.com/index.jsp (database of scholarships)
 - Go College—www.gocollege.com (information on finding a college and financial aid)
 - Federal Student Financial Aid—www.finaid.org (financial aid information and scholarships)
 - Federal Student Aid—<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp> (through the Department of Education)
 - FAFSA4caster—www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov (click on top "Students, Parents, and Counselors" GO)
- Be cautious about information you enter about yourself (standard is typically college major, grade point average, ACT/SAT scores, activities and organizations you belong to, etc.). The computer then selects scholarships that best match your traits. You are then given information about how to obtain applications and apply for scholarships. **TWO important items to remember: 1. DON'T GET DISCOURAGED in the application process! 2. there are scholarships available to you even after you have entered post-secondary education!**
- J. Scholarship tips—PROOFREAD, take your time, be you, type and recreate exactly if possible, etc. There will be more information available on **December 13!**
- K. **NOTIFY ME OF SCHOLARSHIPS RECEIVED ASAP! THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SENIOR BANQUET MATERIALS!**

FINANCIAL AID

- A. Most students get their financial aid for post-secondary institutions from the federal aid programs that provide grants and loans. How much you qualify for will be based on the income and assets of you and your family.
- B. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the form you must fill out to determine how much federal financial aid you will receive.
- C. The FAFSA will be available in December (?). It cannot be completed until your family's 2010 income tax forms have been completed, and it cannot be filed until after January 1, 2011.
- D. Many colleges have a "priority date" for financial aid. Students who have an application for admission, scholarship application, and the FAFSA on file at the school by the priority date are given first

consideration for financial aid. Since schools have a limited amount of money available for certain types of aid, you could find money no longer available if you miss the priority date. This date is around **February 15-March 1** for many schools, but aid is often awarded on a “first come, first served” basis, so apply as early as possible after January 1.

E. REMEMBER, YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO FINANCIAL AID!

F. You will be given more financial aid details later this semester. Again, financial aid/scholarship night will be held **December 13, 2010**, starting at 6:00 PM. This presentation will provide information to you and your parents concerning the FAFSA and other financial aid issues.

POST-SECONDARY VISITS

A. Plan to USE (not ABUSE) your school visits. Each senior will be allowed to take two school visits.

Additional visits may be approved for legitimate reasons. Please do not abuse your visitation privileges by taking more than one visit to the same school, visiting schools in which you have no interest, visiting other schools after you have made your school selection, or going along when a friend makes a campus visit.

“Apartment hunting” and other activities that could be completed on weekends are not considered valid reasons for college visits. **APRIL 21, 2011, IS THE DEADLINE FOR COLLEGE VISITS!**

B. A complete campus visit should include the following:

★ Office of admissions

★ Office of financial aid/scholarships

★ Visits to areas of academic interest (major)

★ Campus tour

★ Tour of housing facilities

★ MORE! ASK for it! This is a HUGE investment!

C. Procedure for arranging a campus visit:

① Arrange a visitation date on your own time. Once arranged, tell the counselor the details of the visit and a form will be provided to you.

② Complete the middle section of the form (ALL PARTS, including parent signature).

③ Take the form to the NVHS office to obtain a pre-absence form, which must then be signed by your teachers at least one day before the school visit.

④ Have a representative from the office of admissions complete the lower portion of the form on the day of the visit.

⑤ Return the form to the NVHS counselor THE NEXT SCHOOL DAY (after your visit) for the final date and signature (bottom).

Please notify me as much as possible in advance about your visits.

JOB SHADOWING

If you would like to “try out” a potential career, you are encouraged to pursue a job shadowing experience.

Students who job shadow will be required to complete a short report on the experience. See Mrs. Evans if this is something you plan to do.

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

Each senior will have an individual conference with the counselor. The timeframe for visits is indicated on your “Senior Pass” (the present-September 30, 2010). This visit will be used to discuss graduation requirements, career interests, educational and career plans, and anything else of concern. The visit will last approximately five minutes. While this is a prearranged visit, please stop by Mrs. Evans’s office at any time with individual questions or concerns. Every effort will be made to provide ALL seniors with the information, materials, and advice they need—but students need to make their needs known so that assistance can be provided.

ACT AND SAT

A. If you plan to use ACT or SAT scores for scholarship consideration, take the test EARLY your senior year.

B. The ACT is being used increasingly for the awarding of scholarships. Generally, scores of 26 or above start to make a student competitive, but scores as low as 21 may qualify you for some scholarships. There are some highly selective scholarships that may require ACT scores of 30+ for students to be competitive.

C. You may want to retake the test IF you were not prepared, did not feel well, or are willing to prepare for a another taking of the test. Schools and scholarship programs typically use your highest score, so you’re only risking your time and money.

- D. **Preparation for the test WILL help.** At a minimum, take the practice paper test. Additional books and computer programs for test preparation are available in the school library and on the Internet (www.number2.com or www.March2Success.com).
- E. A few students may want to take the SAT test in addition to the ACT if a school they are considering or a scholarship program they are applying to requires the SAT. Many schools and scholarship programs accept the ACT but not all.
- F. An optional Writing test is available on the ACT, in addition to the standard tests in English, Math, Reading, and Science. During the Writing test, students will have 30 minutes to write an essay on a specific topic. Students will receive two scores on the Writing test, which will NOT affect their scores on the other subtests or their Composite score. In the future, some colleges and scholarship programs WILL REQUIRE students to submit Writing test scores. Check out your post-secondary institutions to see if the Writing portion is a requirement for Fall 2011 admissions.

2010-2011 ACT TEST DATES

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(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
February 12, 2011**	January 7, 2011	January 8 – 21, 2011
April 9, 2011	March 4, 2011	March 5 – 18, 2011
June 11, 2011	May 6, 2011	May 7 – 20, 2011

When you take the ACT or SAT, you will need to enter NV's name and school code (**172-747**) on your registration form so your results will be sent to the school and placed on your transcript. You will also enter post-secondary school codes. **DO THIS!**

Area ACT test locations available for most test dates include Sabetha, Marysville, Topeka, and Manhattan. The SAT test is also given in October, November, December, January, March, May, and June for students who may need to take it instead of, or in addition to, the ACT test. See the counselor for application forms and information about both the ACT and SAT. This year's fee for the ACT test is \$33 or \$48 if you take the Writing test. There will be a \$21 late fee if you miss the regular registration deadline but apply by the late registration deadline.

Check with your institution... do you need the ACT/SAT? do you need ACT Plus Writing? If you choose not to take it, does it impact your scholarship eligibility?

INFORMATION IN COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

Among the information available in the counselor's office, you will find:

- Post-secondary catalogs
- Post-secondary viewbooks/applications
- Military information
- Academic information
- Career information
- Scholarship information

*PLEASE NOTE—Many schools are moving to online communication exclusively. Additionally, the school library has career-related materials available. Another option is the Kansas Career Pipeline, which allows students to piece together a career plan that works for them.

DON'T FORGET...

The most important thing at this point in your senior year is to **DO SOMETHING!** You're going to have to make choices and decisions about your future very soon, so now is the time to gather information and check out your options. If you wait until the last minute, you'll still have to make the same decisions, but you'll have less time and information on which to make them, so start the process NOW. Reviewing the resources listed at the beginning of this newsletter is a start. Best of luck...and involve me in the process when you can!

PS As an FYI, be sure to use an email account for applications, scholarships, etc., other than that of the HS as these are deleted in May!