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DIRECTORY OF WISCONSIN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Dear Senior:

You have made it to your last year of high school-Congratulations! You are about to embark on one of the most exciting and important years of your life! Now what?

Over the summer, you were probably asked, “What are you planning to do after graduation?” You may have an answer; you may be asking yourself that very question; either way, NOW is the time to seriously consider and think about this choice.

This is not a decision to be made overnight. We hope that you understand that selecting your goal(s) after graduation is a process and that process will unfold as you go through your senior year and beyond. With every process, there are steps. Our hope for you is that you can take this process in small steps with the help of your family, friends, teachers, guidance counselor and this booklet. Our hope is that you will be able to take a few of these steps with more ease and get off on the right foot as you leave Southwestern High School and move on to bigger things.

Please seek us out; ask us questions, set up appointments. We are here to give you the information you need. We hope that this booklet will be of assistance to you as you proceed through each phase of your decision making process. We wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavors.

GO WILDCATS!

**Administration
School Staff
Guidance Office**

SENIOR CHECKLIST

*** SENIOR REVIEW CONFERENCE**

*** CREDIT CHECK-IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make sure you are on track to receive your diploma prior to graduating.**

ENGLISH	4 Credits
MATH	3 Credits (3 Credits for 4 year colleges)
SCIENCE	3 Credits (3 Credits for 4 year colleges)
SOCIAL STUDIES	3 Credits
PHYSICAL ED.	1.5 Credits or 3 years
HEALTH	.5 Credit or 1 semester

NOTE: Any failed classes which cause a credit shortage (less than 25 credits) or not meeting the Board of Education Requirements will jeopardize the student's eligibility to graduate and/or participate in the graduation ceremony. If this situation occurs the student will need to meet with the high school Principal to discuss and agree on a workable plan of action; the goal being the completion of high school requirements and obtaining the high school diploma. A situation of this nature may or may not also include an endorsement or approval by the Board of Education and may require you to appear in person at a school board meeting.

*** CLASS RANK AND GRADE POINT AVERAGE-Check with your Guidance Counselor for updated rankings at the end of each semester.**

*** TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS-In order for the school to send out an official transcript, you must fill out a Transcript Request Form that must be signed by your parent/guardian if you are under the age of 18. You may list multiple requests on one form, however, you will need to have the specific mailing address(es) indicated on the Transcript Request Form before submitting it to the Guidance Office. (NOTE: Transcripts will be mailed out once a week, so make sure you get your request forms in as soon as you can.)**

*****Note: Please submit all final (8 semester) transcript requests directly to the high school office with the accurate mailing address so that the final transcripts can be mailed out in a timely manner following your graduation.**

*** GUIDANCE OFFICE-is also the College/Career Center, therefore it should become your second home! Reasons to visit the office often include, but are not exclusive to:**

- ~Meeting with your Guidance Counselor often**
- ~Signing up to meet with a college/military representative**
- ~Picking up college application/information materials**
- ~Picking up ACT/SAT registration forms/materials**
- ~Sending out applications (applications will be mailed out once a week)**
- ~Scholarship Opportunities**

*** SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION-Keep your eyes and ears open to scholarship opportunities. Here are ways to access information:**

- ~Announcements**
- ~Check with the financial aid office at the schools you are considering or ask your college representative**
- ~Review your CD of local scholarships to determine your eligibility and then apply**
- ~Use the internet-www.fastweb.com**

***COLLEGE VISITS-College visits are an essential part of your college process. We encourage you to make your visits with your parents. If you would like to visit a certain college and are not sure where to start see your Guidance Counselor. College visits/tours need to be scheduled by you and your parent/guardian. Once a visit has been scheduled you need to bring a note from home to the high school office and make sure your teachers know when you will be gone. School board policy allows you two college visits/tours each semester. Be wise as this is a privilege and needs to be treated as one.**

STEPS IN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

STEP #1

DETERMINE WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

You need to consider what you want out of your college experience and in what type of environment you will feel comfortable. The following offers some suggestions for items that you may want to take into account when choosing a college.

***SIZE OF THE COLLEGE AND THE CLASSES**

Would you like to know everyone on campus or would you prefer to see new faces? Would you be more comfortable in a small class or a class of 300? How do you learn better, in a lecture-style setting or a small discussion-style setting?

***CAMPUS LIFE**

What type of social events are well liked on campus? Do the students stay on campus on the weekends? Are there fraternities/sororities? What athletic events are well attended and why? Are there clubs/organizations on campus that interest you?

***DIVERSITY**

Do the students come from Wisconsin or other states? Do they all look like you or is there a mix of ethnic backgrounds?

***LIVING ACCOMODATIONS**

Do most of the students live on or off campus? Is there adequate housing available? What are the residence halls like?

***LOCATION**

Would you prefer to live in a suburban, urban, or rural setting? In what geographical location do you wish to live? What type of climate do you prefer? How far away from home do you want to go?

***TYPE OF INSTITUTION**

Check out the Type of Institution Sheet in this booklet. What is the school's academic calendar? Is it semester, trimester, or quarters?

***ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

If you have a decided major, does the college offer it? Is the department well respected in the discipline? If you are undecided, does the college offer a wide variety of major options?

***ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

What are the GPA requirements? What are the average ACT/SAT scores? Do not be discouraged if the average test scores are above your own scores. Remember it is the average, which means there are students both above and below the average.

***COST AND FINANCIAL AID AVAILABILITY**

Is the school affordable for you? What is the financial aid package? Do not automatically eliminate a school from your list because of the cost. Compare the financial aid packages from the schools you are considering. Sometimes, the more expensive schools are able to offer a financial aid package that may make it as affordable as a less expensive school.

***LENGTH OF TIME IT WILL TAKE TO EARN A DEGREE**

Ask about the average number of years students take to earn their degree at this institution.

***FACILITIES THAT ARE AVAILABLE**

Computer Labs? Athletic facilities? Library? Do these and other student services (writing labs and tutoring) meet your needs?

***PLACEMENT RATE AND GRADUATION RATE**

Check out the retention rate? What percentage of students graduate and find a job in their field? Do they get into graduate school? What career placement services do they offer? Are they helpful?

***SAFETY ON CAMPUS**

Is security readily available? What types of security programs, such as safe-ride and emergency phones, are in place?

STEP #2

MAKE A LIST OF POTENTIAL COLLEGES

Based on the criteria that are important to you, Make a list of colleges that fit your requirements.

- *Do a search online (www.collegeboard.com) web sites such as this one can help you select colleges that match your criteria.**
- *Search the internet, books, and magazines to find out more about colleges.**
- *Request more information about colleges by visiting their web site or by sending in information request cards.**
- *Attend local college and education fairs and speak to college representatives that come to your school.**
- *Talk to friends, family and your counselor for information and advice. Speak to alumni from your high school and find out their impressions.**

STEP #3

NARROW YOUR CHOICES

Determine which of the colleges on your list best fit your criteria and interests.

- *Read the information that you have requested.**
- *Search the college's home page on the internet.**
- *Schedule a campus visit at the colleges you have chosen. If a visit is not possible, check out the web site-many colleges now have virtual tours that you can take. Otherwise call the Admissions Office and ask a lot of questions.**

STEP #4

APPLY TO THE SCHOOLS THAT INTEREST YOU

You should have narrowed down your list of potential colleges and have an idea of where you would like to attend college. Submit an application for each school. Most schools offer online applications as well for your convenience. Most colleges ask for a statement on the application from your Guidance Counselor. Complete your application and get it to your counselor as soon as you can so that your counselor has time to put together the very best statement possible on your behalf.

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

Liberal Arts Colleges

- **Offer undergraduate students a bachelor's (4 year) or associates (2 year) degree**
- **Broad base of courses available (social sciences, humanities, sciences and business)**
- **Courses of study begin with general education requirements; students choose at least one area of in-depth study to be their major**
- **Generally smaller than universities, with smaller classes**
- **Focus is on graduating on-time**

Technical Institutes

- **May offer an associate's (2 year) degree, certificate or diploma**
- **Preparation for a specific career with specialization in one skill area (medical technology, business, cosmetology or computer programming) and few general education classes are required**
- **Career specific core classes**

Community Colleges

- **May offer an associate's (2 year) degree, certificate or diploma**
- **Specialized occupational preparation**
- **May also be used as preparation for a 4-year college and/or university**
- **Class size is generally small and students are able to receive individual attention**
- **Less expensive**

Universities

- **Offer several levels of degrees (bachelor's, master's and doctorate)**
- **Include a liberal arts college as well as professional colleges and graduate programs**
- **Divided into several colleges such as the College of Business or the College of Education**
- **Wide variety of academic programs**
- **Generally, universities are larger than liberal arts colleges (although there are smaller universities) with larger classes**
- **Classes are often taught in lecture format and may be taught by graduate assistants**

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

1. GET AN APPLICATION

Most applications will be available in the Guidance Office or online. If not, contact the admissions office at the college(s) you have chosen to request a paper application form.

2. CHECK THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Check to make sure you meet the admission requirements in terms of:

- ~number of high school credits/courses**
- ~appropriate class rank/percentage**
- ~ACT/SAT requirements**
- ~application deadlines**

You can find such information online or in any of the resource materials available through the Guidance Office.

3. FILL OUT APPLICATIONS CAREFULLY

Your application is an opportunity to make a statement to the admissions committee. BE PROUD OF WHAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED. Make sure your application is NEAT, FREE OF MISTAKES, and TYPE the application or USE BLACK OR BLUE INK. This is the college's first impression of you as a student/person.

Double check your application and have someone else look over it. Make sure you include all that the college is asking for when you send it, including the application fee. Most colleges charge an application fee anywhere from \$25 to \$100.

4. TRANSCRIPT RELEASE

You must complete this form. A parent signature is required if the student is not 18 years of age.

5. COMPARE/RANK YOUR TOP COLLEGES (Things to ask a college representative).

6. WAIT

Now all you have to do is wait to hear from the college(s) that you have applied to. If you have not heard from them within 6 weeks, call the admissions office to verify the status of your application. If you run into problems, see your Guidance Counselor.

TIP: MAKE COPIES OF ALL MATERIALS YOU SUBMIT AND KEEP TRACK OF YOUR APPLICATION(S)

Develop a file or a database for each college so your records will be organized and accessible. Also, put together a checklist for each college of the necessary application steps to help you keep track of your progress on each application. Enter information about the requirements, application deadline, required test(s), and record the date you complete each step.

Some colleges will respond to your application two to three weeks after they receive all the required information. Others will wait until spring to let you know your admission status. The response you receive from a college may range from unqualified admittance to rejection of your application. In between, there are several kinds of “qualified admittance” such as admission notice from a school, note carefully whether they require additional steps, such as sending a deposit, completing a health form, or making arrangements for housing. Be sure to complete the follow-through steps before their deadlines!

THINGS TO ASK A COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE

What type of financial aid is offered? Are scholarships, loans, grants, work-study jobs available?

What are the admission criteria?

What types of housing do you offer?

What types of residence halls are available?

What types of student activities are offered? Student Government, sports, music, theatre, art publications, Greek system?

How safe is the institution?

How extensive are the school's job placement, career planning, and counseling services?

What is the average class size?

What facilities are offered? Library, gym, book store, student health center, career center, writing center, tutoring center, cafeteria, wellness center?

What type of transportation is available? Is there adequate parking? Is the parking free or is a permit required?

What types of advising are available? Counseling, faculty advisors, academics planning?

When you are ready to look at a specific school...

- >Arrange to tour the campus

- >Ask to meet with the staff and students who can tell you about the areas in which you are interested.
- >Arrange to talk with someone about tuition, scholarships, and financial aid.
- >Consider sitting in on some classes which you might take.
- >In you know someone on campus personally, be sure to talk with them.
- >Don't be afraid to ask questions!!
- >Ask yourself: "Will this school be able to meet my needs academically, socially, emotionally and intellectually?"

THE APPLICATION ESSAY

Think first about the purposes the essay serves. One purpose, obviously, is to give a sample of your writing. Since colleges place a premium on strong writing skills, they will look for a mastery of mechanics as well as fluency and originality. A well written essay gives them a taste of the maturity of your thinking and writing and of your readiness for a competitive liberal program.

A second reason for the essay is for you to share something of yourself that may not be reflected in the rest of your application-something that has shaped your perspective or challenged your beliefs. Or it may show how you see yourself and your place in the community. These qualities are important for admission committees to know when they are deciding on applicants. The essay allows the committee to look beyond the numbers and statistics and gives them a glimpse of your creativity and substance.

There is no formula for a "perfect" essay, but it is one of the most carefully considered, influential and revealing pieces of your application. Choose your topic thoughtfully. Try out a few topics and see which one feels the most natural to you, and closest to your own "voice." Do not pick a topic that is too broad and impersonal. Structure your material well and be concise: make a point to get to the point. Write and rewrite!

Make sure that you have others look over the essay for constructive criticism and revisions. The essay is the one piece of the application that you have full control over-so use it to your advantage.

YOUR RESUME-THINGS TO INCLUDE!

This is a resume of your career in high school-include everything that you have been involved in and be specific (did you hold a position, did you help create a program/project/etc.). This will also be used to give people you have asked to write a letter of recommendation for you and for scholarship applications. It is best you do not assume that these people know all of your achievements and activities. Describe to them what makes you a unique person and do not be modest. Include length of time and dates of your participation in your activities.

NAME _____

GPA _____ **ACT** _____ **SAT** _____ **CLASS RANK** _____

School Activities:

Clubs-

Performing Arts-

Athletics-

Community Service:

Leadership (school, community, work):

Special Achievement (writing, all-conference, math contests, Scouts, church):

Unique Experiences and Interests:

Describe your educational plans after high school:

List at least one of your strengths and at least one of your weaknesses. What are 5 qualities you possess that your friends would use to describe you?

HELPFUL INTERNET SITES

THE INTEREST FINDER

www.myfuture.com

Offers career search tools and military information and much more. The Work Interest Quiz can help you find some answers.

THE COLLEGE PLANNING CENTER

www.collegeplanningcenter.org

Offers a variety of college planning strategies and services.

ACT ONLINE

www.act.org

Provides a variety of different search engines to college bound students/parents.

COLLEGE BOARD ONLINE

www.collegeboard.org

Connects you to varied materials, including ExPan, which offers in-depth information about colleges, careers, and financial aid for more than 3,000 two- and four-year colleges.

US NEWS REPORT

www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm

This is the *U.S. News & World Report's* annual ranking of academic institutions. It also offers a "Compare College" section, which helps students and parents in narrowing college choices.

SEARCH COLLEGES

www.collegeview.com

You can take virtual tours of colleges, check into financial aid and apply on line.

www.wiredscholar.com

This is one of the most complete web sites available for assisting students in making college choices.

www.anycollege.com

The best college search engine on the internet.

INTERNET'S LARGEST FREE SCHOLARSHIPS SEARCH

www.fastweb.com

This website contains over 275,000 scholarships, fellowships, grants and loans. You may choose to complete their profile, which will then search only for those awards, which apply to you.

www.finaid.com

Covers loans, scholarships, and military aid. It walks you through the types of aid, as well as, explains the ins and outs of applying.

**SOUTHWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL
REQUEST FOR TRANSCRIPT**

Your transcript is your high school record and cannot be released without permission of your parent/guardian or your own signature. Your signature gives Southwestern High School permission to release your/your child's transcript to the requested schools listed below.

Law requires a parent signature for students under 18 years of age.
OFFICAL TRANSCRIPTS CAN ONLY BE SENT DIRECTLY FROM
SOUTHWESTERN TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

Please Print

Date of Request _____

Name of Student _____

Graduation Year _____

Request for transcripts to be sent to the following school(s)

***Note: You must include below the name and correct mailing address for each school that you are requesting a transcript for; if you have any questions regarding obtaining a mailing address please see your Guidance Counselor.**

I HEREBY GRANT FULL PERMISSION TO SOUTHWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL TO RELAEASE MY/MY CHILDS TRANSCRIPT.

Parent Signature or student (if student is 18 years of age or older) Date

