

# The Scholarship Advisement Program's College Planning Road Map

## 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE (Senior)

### Fall

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- Meet with your guidance counselor. Update them on your summer activities. Make sure you are meeting high school graduation and college admission requirements. If you are in a state program like Oklahoma's Promise, be sure you are taking the required courses.
- Keep your grades up and your attendance strong!
- Consider taking concurrent classes next semester to earn college credit.
- Continue researching scholarships. Contact SAP for access to our Native American Scholarship Database, which holds over 40,000 scholarship applications. Ask your counselor about local scholarship opportunities.
- Attend college fairs and information events like SAP's Ivy League & Friends Event. Meet with recruiters from colleges that interest you.
- Visit any remaining colleges on your list of possibilities.
- If necessary, take the SAT and ACT again. Do this in early fall so you will meet all submission deadlines. Have all scores sent to the colleges where you are applying.
- Draft a final list of colleges to which you will apply. Many students select three to five schools: their dream school, a safety school, and two to three good matches for their grades and achievements.
- Check application deadlines. Early decision is often November 15.
- Begin college interviews. Consider fly-in visitation programs for your top choices. Some universities will provide funds for Native American students to visit their campuses.
- Work on college applications. Finish admissions essays, resumes, portfolios, and audition pieces and ask counselors and mentors for feedback.
- Give recommendation forms to the appropriate counselors or teachers. If hard copies are required, give them a stamped and addressed envelope. If electronic forms are required, send them the links. Make sure your portions of the forms are filled out correctly and completely, and confirm the deadlines with them verbally and in writing.
- Ask your counselor about fee waivers for colleges on your list.
- In October, apply to the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation. They provide scholarships to over 1400 students each year, totaling over \$3.4 million.
- Begin working on the Gates Millennium Scholars Program application. They select 1,000 minority students to receive full scholarships to the college of their choice. If appropriate, funding may continue through graduate school.

Explore regional scholarship opportunities such as Southeastern Oklahoma State University President's Leadership Class (PLC) or Honors Program. Programs like these provide scholarships and support for selected students. Most have deadlines in January so start early.

Schedule a pre-winter break appointment with your guidance counselor to review all application materials.

## **Spring**

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Submit all college applications before their deadlines—the earlier, the better!

Request that your high school send transcripts to all colleges where you applied.

Verify that official ACT/SAT scores have been received by all colleges where you applied.

Submit a Gates Millennium Scholars Application in the first week of January.

Ask your parents or guardians to complete their income tax forms as soon as possible so you can begin filling out financial aid paperwork.

Complete and submit a financial aid application for the colleges where you have applied, even if you have not yet received an acceptance letter.

Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) between January 1 and February 15. You must fill this out to receive grants, loans, or work study.

Once you complete a FAFSA, you should receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks. Make any necessary corrections and return it the FAFSA processor as soon as possible. If you wait, your financial aid may be delayed.

Confirm with the financial aid office of each college that they have received your financial aid materials. Ask if they need any other documentation.

Continue researching scholarships using the Native American Scholarship Database. Ask your counselor about local scholarship opportunities.

If you plan to explore a degree in a specialized field, look for scholarship opportunities within the field. For example, the Indian Health Services Scholarship application is due in March.

Take the college placement exams for any AP and honors classes you have taken. These may allow you to qualify for college credit.

Begin watching for communication from your selected colleges in March. Most will notify you by April 15 whether or not you have been accepted for admission. Compare acceptance letters and scholarship/financial aid packages for each place you have gained admission. Seek support from your counselors and mentors when weighing your options.

- Choose a college and notify them of your decision by May 1. Respond promptly, in writing, to secure admissions, scholarship, and financial aid offers.
- Notify any colleges where you received acceptance, but do not plan to attend, of your decision by June 1 (or their stated deadline).
- Graduate high school!

## **Summer**

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- Have your high school send all final transcripts to your chosen college.
- Contact your chosen college to verify the total costs and due dates of all tuition, fee, room and board payments.
- Notify SAP of your college choice. We will put you in touch with the Peer Advisor for your campus. Peer Advisors can assist you with the paperwork and transition to college life.
- Contact your SAP counselor to learn about additional services for college students from Choctaw Nation, including laptop and clothing allowances, plus classroom training programs.
- Make plans for transportation to campus in August and for freshman year housing.
- Write thank you letters to organizations that have offered you scholarships, grants, and other financial aid.
- Look for summer jobs or internships in your fields of interest.
- Continue saving money for college.
- Continue researching scholarships. There are many opportunities for students who have already started college. Contact SAP for access to our Native American Scholarship Database, which holds over 40,000 scholarship applications.
- Participate in your college's summer orientation for incoming freshmen.

**For more college planning and funding resources and information, please visit [www.choctawnation-sap.com](http://www.choctawnation-sap.com)!**

*This guide brought to you by the Choctaw Nation's*

