

## EducationQuest Foundation

# College Planning Bulletin

*A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students. Feel free to reproduce this information in your high school publications.*

December 2004

### **Countdown to College Call-In Show airs December 9**

Get expert advice on college planning, admissions and financial aid during the sixth annual *Nebraska Connects: Countdown to College* call-in program **Thursday, December 9 at 7:00 pm CT (6:00 MT)** on the Nebraska ETV Network.

During this one-hour program, college-planning experts will answer viewers' questions on the air. You can submit questions now or the evening of the show by calling 800-666-3721 or e-mailing them to [countdown@educationquest.org](mailto:countdown@educationquest.org). You'll receive an answer on the air or via e-mail. *Nebraska Connects: Countdown to College* is a co-production of EducationQuest Foundation and the Nebraska ETV Network.

### **Financial Aid Programs cover college funding options**

EducationQuest is conducting statewide financial aid programs that explain the types of financial aid, how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), how colleges award financial aid, and the student loan process. The programs are free and open to the public. To find the program nearest you, visit [www.educationquest.org/fap.asp](http://www.educationquest.org/fap.asp).

### **How to estimate your FAFSA results**

As a college-bound senior, you will soon complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Colleges will use your FAFSA results to determine how much they will award you in financial aid. To estimate your FAFSA results now, use the *College Funding Estimator* at [www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org). The program will ask for income tax information – use either your 2003 taxes or estimate 2004.

### **Winning the scholarship game**

Follow these tips to increase your chances of earning scholarships:

**Don't pay for scholarship searches.** Use free resources including *ScholarshipQuest* at [www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org); [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com); [www.fastaid.com](http://www.fastaid.com) and [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com).

**Visit your guidance counselor weekly** for information about local scholarships.

**Get organized.** Place scholarship applications in deadline order and prioritize each award. Local awards and college-specific applications deserve top priority because you're more likely to earn them.

**Provide a list of your activities, honors and volunteer or paid jobs.** Compile and update that information using the *Activities Resume* at [www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org).

**Earn the best possible ACT/SAT scores** by taking the exam in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year.

**Use quality references** such as a teacher, coach or counselor. Encourage them to write specific examples of your leadership skills. Give them advance notice and a specific deadline.

**Get an early start on essays.** Describe your interests, hope for the future, and leadership abilities.

**Pay close attention to grammar, spelling and neatness.** Ask at least two people to proofread your application.