

# EducationQuest Foundation

# College Planning Bulletin

*A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students*

**December 2005**

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## **Countdown to College Call-In Show airs December 15**

Get expert advice on college planning, admissions and financial aid during the seventh annual *Countdown to College* call-in program **Thursday, December 15 at 7:00 pm CT (6:00 MT)** on NET Television.

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. If you miss the live call-in program December 15, watch for the following rebroadcasts:

**Saturday, December 17** at 5:00 pm CT (4:00 MT) on NET2

**Sunday, December 18** at 11:00 pm CT (10:00 MT) on NET

**Thursday, December 22** at 9:00 pm CT (8:00 MT) on NET2

**Thursday, December 29** at 8:00 am CT (7:00 MT) on NET2

**Saturday, December 31** at 7:00 am CT (6:00 MT) on NET2

A Spanish-voiceover version of the program will air in late January or early February (date and time to be announced).

*Countdown to College: A Nebraska Connects Special* is a co-production of EducationQuest Foundation and NET Television.

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## **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).

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

If you're 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 your 2004 taxes or estimate 2005.

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## **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.

**Continually update your activities, honors and volunteer or paid jobs** 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, hopes for the future, and leadership abilities.

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

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### **December "To Do" List**

Complete these tasks during December to stay on the right college planning track.

#### **Seniors:**

- Submit college applications.
- Estimate FAFSA results using the *College Funding Estimator* at [www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org).
- Attend the Financial Aid Program in your area.
- Continue to apply for scholarships.
- Make a FAFSA appointment at EducationQuest.

#### **Juniors**

- Estimate FAFSA results using the *College Funding Estimator* at [www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org).
- Attend the Financial Aid Program in your area.
- Research college choices.
- Search for scholarships.
- Register by December 22 for the January 28 SAT.
- Register by January 6 for the February 11 ACT.

**For free help with college planning, contact EducationQuest Foundation:**

#### **Kearney**

308-234-6310  
800-666-3721

#### **Lincoln**

402-475-5222  
800-303-3745

#### **Omaha**

402-391-4033  
888-357-6300

[www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org)

*EducationQuest Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization with a mission to improve access to higher education in Nebraska.*