

EducationQuest Foundation College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

December 2006

Countdown to College Call-In Show airs December 6

Get expert advice on college planning, admissions and financial aid during the eighth annual *Countdown to College* call-in program **Wednesday, December 6 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. You'll receive an answer on the air or via e-mail.

If you miss the live program December 6, watch for rebroadcasts on NET2:

- Friday, December 8 at 10:00 am CT (9:00 MT)
- Friday, December 8 at 3:00 pm CT (2:00 MT)
- Saturday, December 9 at 12:00 pm CT (11:00 am MT)
- Friday, December 15 at 9:00 pm CT (8:00 MT)

A Spanish-voiceover version 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.

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.

Seniors...have you submitted your college applications?

If you haven't submitted your admission applications yet, it's time to get serious! Contact your top college choices to determine application deadlines and procedures. Ask if the admission application is also the application for college-based scholarships. If not, ask about the scholarship application process.

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. The program will ask for income tax information. *You may estimate your 2006 tax information to complete the Estimator but should use your completed 2006 tax returns when you complete and submit the FAFSA.*

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; www.fastweb.com; www.fastaid.com and www.srnexpress.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.

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.

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.
- Attend the Financial Aid Program in your area.
- Continue to apply for scholarships.
- Make a FAFSA appointment at EducationQuest if you need help with the form.

Juniors

- Attend the Financial Aid Program in your area.
- Research college choices.
- Search for scholarships.
- [Register by December 20](#) for the January 27 SAT.
- [Register by January 5](#) for the February 10 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

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