



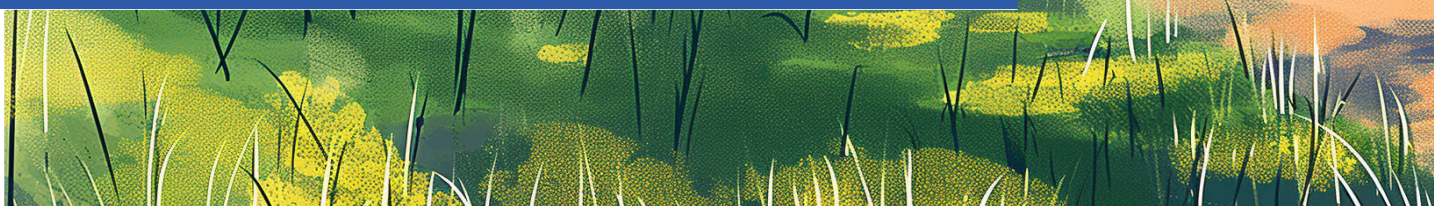
INSPIRED
PATHWAYS



Spring Newsletter

INSIDE / APRIL / MAY 2024

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A Pivotal Summer for Rising Seniors

The summer before your senior year of high school is an incredibly important time for college planning. The more you do over the summer, the more likely you are to be admitted to the colleges of your choice. We've outlined some of the most important steps rising high school seniors can take to ensure success in their college search.

Set goals

Before determining your major or what college to attend, it's important to consider what you enjoy doing and what your strengths are. Research college majors and the types of jobs you might get with each. Speak with teachers, coaches, advisors and other adults who have gone to college to learn how they got to where they are.

8-12

THE NUMBER OF COLLEGES THE AVERAGE STUDENT APPLIES TO

Review your college options

Once you have determined your goals, you can assess ways to achieve them. Consider your academic record and available resources to learn which colleges may be right to you. Will you pursue a community college degree? Will you start at a community college, then transfer? Do you have the grades to be admitted to a four-year college? Does your family have the resources to pay for a four-year college or will you need to apply for financial aid and scholarships?

Build your college list

A good college list should include:

- At least two "safety" schools, colleges where your chance of being admitted is higher than 75%
- Four to six "target" schools, where you have a 40–60% chance of being accepted
- Two "reach" schools, colleges where you'll have less than a 25% chance of being admitted

Having this diverse college list will give you the best chance of being admitted to a top college and getting scholarships from your target and safety schools. During August, Inspired Pathways will be hosting "List Assessment" appointments, which will give you the opportunity to speak with an experienced college advisor about your choices and learn about new schools that would be good to add to your list.

Once you have your list of desired colleges, confirm the application deadlines and essay requirements for each of these colleges. Make sure to do this early because colleges can easily tell when an application or essay has been rushed.

Document your achievements

Every four-year college application will ask you to list and discuss your high school extracurricular activities (student government, sports, volunteer work, etc.). It is important to make sure you give them a good idea of what you've worked on. Start by making a list of all the clubs, organizations, jobs and responsibilities you have, the work you did for each and what successes you had. You'll also want to identify any awards or honors you've received.

Start writing essays

A good essay will significantly increase your chances of being accepted to your top college. You can find the Common App Essay topics here:

commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts

The most widely-used application in the U.S. is the Common Application. If you apply to a four-year college or university you will likely use it in your application process.

You will likely need to write and submit only one essay, so it is essential that you thoroughly think about which prompt (if you decide to use one) to choose. Select the one that will allow you to shine.

To learn more about what colleges look for in an essay, attend one of our College Essay Workshop presentations over the summer. You can find links in our “Upcoming Events” section under the resources tab at Hormelinspiredpathways.com

Make a testing plan

While community colleges do not require the SAT or ACT, many four-year colleges do. These tests can have a big impact on your chances of being admitted, so improving your score is one of the best ways to raise your likelihood of getting accepted.

The best test-prep program available online is Khan Academy, and it is 100% free. It was created in collaboration with the College Board, which owns the SAT, and it adjusts to the needs of each student. One to two hours of practice each week over the summer can lead to a massive improvement.

We also suggest that you plan on taking these tests two or three times. SAT testing occurs in May, June, August and October. Taking the test once at the end of junior year and another one or two times in August / October following a summer of studying will give you the best chance to get the score you want.

FAFSA Issues Continue



As most families with students in or about to go to college are now aware, the launch of the new FAFSA website has been riddled with problems from the start. There have been log-in issues that have lasted weeks, incorrect calculations resulting in families not getting as much aid as they should, and delays at every step of the process that have colleges months behind where they normally are when it comes to sending out financial aid offers.

There were hopes that by April the issues would be resolved, but over the last few weeks, two new errors have been identified:

- The first is relatively straightforward: If you have submitted your FAFSA already but need to go back and make changes, you cannot. This glitch is currently being worked on by those at FAFSA, but no timeline for a fix has been announced. If you need to make changes, the best advice we can give is to just keep trying periodically until it works.
- The second is an incorrect calculation of the student's financial need. Unlike the issue with corrections, the calculation issue only impacts a portion of FAFSA users. For those who are using the Inspired Pathways Scholarship, this won't be an issue as we'll review your files and work with our college partners to make sure you aren't paying for anything you shouldn't. For four-year college students, this can cause issues. So, if you believe that your financial aid award is incorrect or would just like it looked at for piece of mind, please reach out to our advisor team.

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Helping Your High School Graduate Transition to College

Making the move from high school to college can be exciting, difficult and confusing. While some students transition easily, for many it can take months to adapt to the college lifestyle, while also figuring out how to manage time and navigate the many opportunities and support systems available on campus.

We want to make sure every Inspired Pathways student is successful once they arrive on their college campus. **Here are seven things you can do this summer to help you prepare for college.**

Make a financial plan

While every student attending college through the Hormel Inspired Pathways program will have all of their tuition paid, there are other costs to consider. You will want to prepare for transportation costs, meal plan and food costs, books and other course materials you'll need. Once you have an idea of what these extra expenses will add up to, you can start budgeting or looking for funding possibilities.

One great option is to get involved in college work-study programs. Even students who don't need funding should look into these programs. Nothing beats getting paid to do your homework! Also important to note, if you are on a Federal Work-Study program, you may also qualify for SNAP while at college.

There are also millions of independent scholarships available that can be used for any college cost, not just tuition. These smaller scholarships are a great way to cover the extra costs and they are very easy to apply for.

You can **find a list of some of these scholarships on the Hormel Inspired Pathways website** in the Student Resources section.

Identify on-campus support programs

From academic tutoring to mental health support, colleges offer a wide variety of support programs. Take some time to identify them during the summer before you enroll. Most colleges will have all of this information on their website, but you can also reach out to a student advisor to find out what's available and how to take advantage of it. In general, be on the lookout for:

Academic Supports: student and teaching assistant tutoring offices; study, writing and testing centers; and academic planning offices

Mental Health Supports: wellness centers; counseling offices; language/ translating support; child care services; and disability support services

Student Involvement: student activities center and clubs; career services; library and bookstore; work-study office; fitness centers; and dining

Gather important documentation

You will need to bring some important documents with you to college. You might need proof of acceptance to register for classes, a photocopy of your birth certificate if you get a part-time job, and your health insurance card if you have a health emergency. Some of the documents you may want to include are:

- Driver's license and/or passport (copy and actual)
- Health and dental insurance cards
- Copy of your birth certificate
- Copy of social security card (if you don't have one, summer is a good time to request one with the Social Security Administration)
- Student ID
- Immunization records



Orientation and academic planning days

You should absolutely attend one of your college's freshman orientations because they are a great way to help with your transition from high school to college. This is an excellent opportunity to tour the campus, ask current students questions, meet other incoming freshmen and make some friends before your first day on campus. In addition to orientation, some colleges allow freshmen to meet with advisors ahead of time to schedule classes and provide all the login and registration information you'll need to use throughout your college experience.

Textbooks and materials

Textbooks and other academic materials are things you will need to buy. However, you don't always have to buy them new, especially textbooks. Before spending hundreds of dollars on new books, see if your college has any used book sales organizations. Used textbooks will cost much less than new ones, and sometimes they even have helpful notes from past students! Another place to find your books is your college's inter-library loan program. Typically almost every book that would be required is available, and they're all free! Be aware that there will be a limited quantity so make sure

to pick yours up early. They can also take a couple of weeks to deliver, so it's important to stop by your library early to ask about the book loan options.

Make a plan for your daily life

One of the best parts of college is the amount of time and freedom you will have. The average college student spends just 15 hours in class per week! However, a good rule of thumb is that for every hour you spend in class, you should spend one to two hours outside of class on coursework, which means one to two hours studying, doing homework or working on assignments. So you should plan on spending 30–45 hours on schoolwork a week. That is equivalent to a full-time job. It is important to create a plan for when you will do this work, use your syllabus to create a schedule of when assignments will be due and a time to do them.

Students should identify two hours per day that they will be in the library or another location they work well in, to do that work. By having a daily time to do your work, you will make sure that you are not procrastinating. And don not make the most common freshman mistake: leaving projects and assignments for finals week when all you will want to do is study for your important upcoming exams.

You'll also want to get into a consistent sleep and eating schedule to make sure you don't end up missing morning classes or skipping meals because your schedule doesn't give you enough time to get to the dining halls. When you get to college, you will likely see many classmates struggle because they're exhausted after pulling an all-nighter or not having time to grab a bite to eat.

Connect with your classmates

Meeting new people is one of the most important parts of the college experience. They may end up being life-long friends, but even if they don't, finding a group of friends on campus is incredibly beneficial. They'll be able to help you with assignments, connect you with organizations you may not have heard of, and later on may even be the connection you need to land your dream job.



Making the Most Out of Your College Visits

College visits are an incredibly important part of the college admissions process. In addition to helping students gain a better understanding of what the college has to offer, they can also play a role in helping a student gain admission.

Here are some tips to help you make the most of your visits:

Attend an information session and campus tour

Most colleges offer information sessions and campus tours for prospective students. These are great opportunities to learn more about the school and get a feel for the campus. Make sure to be engaged and ask questions during the presentation, which are often given by the very people who will be reading your application.

95%

Students who report that a campus tour is important in their decision to enroll, according to one survey

Meet with an admissions officer

Try to arrange a meeting with one of the college's admissions representatives. By meeting with an admission rep, you'll be able to ask specific questions and at the same time demonstrate your interest in the college. Demonstrated interest is a factor that approximately 50% of four-year colleges consider when assessing applications. The smaller the college, the more likely they are to consider demonstrated interest.

Sit in on a class

If possible, try to attend a class in your area of interest. This will give you a better sense of what the academic experience is like at the school and whether the teaching style and classroom environment are a good fit for you. Also ask about the facilities related to your intended major — you want to know what resources and hands-on learning opportunities are available.

Explore the surrounding area

Take some time to get a feel for the area around campus, to better understand what it's like to live there. This can include checking out nearby restaurants, shops and cultural attractions, as well as looking at housing options. Remember, this is the place that you'll call home for the next few years!

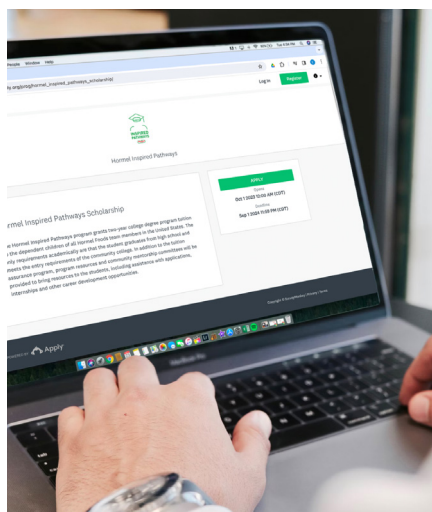
Overall, the key is to be curious and attentive during your visit. Visiting is the best way to figure out if a school is the right fit for you and may even help you get accepted.

UPDATE: Some Colleges Pushing Back Deposit Deadlines

For decades, May 1st has been the deposit deadline for four-year colleges and universities. Instituted by the National Association for College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), this universal deadline was enacted to ensure that students and families had adequate time to assess all of the Financial Aid Award Letters from the colleges the student was admitted to, with the guarantee that the student would not lose their spot prior to the deadline.

However, due to the innumerable mishaps with the new FAFSA rollout, colleges only began receiving student information in the first half of March as opposed to October or November like in previous years. Because of this, many of the nation's four-year colleges have only just started to send out their Award Letters.

To help give families adequate time to make the decision that is best for them, many colleges have pushed back their deadlines for all students, with other colleges pushing back their deadlines on a case-by-case basis. If you have not received all of your Financial Aid Award Letters this year, we strongly suggest you check with the colleges that you're considering to determine how much time you have to make your decision.



Introducing Our New Advising and Admissions and Financial Aid Platform

Makes Applying Easier Than Ever

To better serve our Inspired Pathways students, we have introduced a new portal that will help streamline the application process. Our new portal comes with a host of benefits for students and their families navigating the Hormel Inspired Pathways program.

The main benefit of the new portal is a smoother, simplified application process. Students no longer have to use multiple platforms to complete their application — now, the initial application and subsequent document submissions are all housed in one easy-to-use, secure and accessible location.

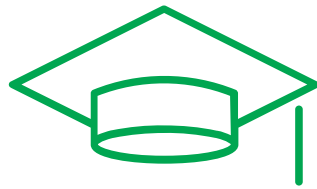
After initial submission, students can track the status of their application and see what tasks they have remaining to complete the application. Plus, they will receive regular reminders about outstanding tasks.

Making changes and updates to your application is now easier than ever. Students no longer have to go through the Inspired Pathways team to make simple application updates like changing an address. Now, students can make updates themselves.

Students have an option to add a parent as a “collaborator” — allowing their parents to access the application and assist with document uploads if needed.

Existing scholarship recipients can use the portal to upload FAFSA and FERPA and other documents. Even though we have a new portal, please note that the scholarship and advising programs remain the same.

If you have questions about the new portal or how best to use it, feel free to reach out to a member of the Inspired Pathways team.



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