

H.H.S.S. Guidance

4U/4M September Newsletter

Date: September 15, 2011

From: HHSS Guidance Office and Student Success Team

To: Parents/Guardians of students in university level Grade 12 classes

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is an exciting and challenging year for you with your graduating student. Especially if this is the first time a child in your family has applied to post-secondary education, the following information may be helpful.

During the early fall, the Guidance Office will meet with every graduating student regarding post-secondary applications. (This takes several weeks, so please be patient: students do not need to make the appointment, we will call them in.) We give them a newsletter which includes important dates, useful websites, and the schedule of college and university presentations. The newsletter is also posted on the school website. We show them how to research universities and colleges online, and how to know if their marks are in the appropriate range for a program. We also check that they are on track to complete the diploma requirement of 40 hours of community service. We offer lunchtime tutorials on the application process. Students are encouraged to consult us as often as needed with questions or concerns.

Application process

Throughout the fall, students should be researching and narrowing down their university or college choices, and beginning the online applications.

Many universities and colleges will visit our school for short presentations. Students must sign up in advance in the guidance office. Also, we will organize two field trips: to the University Information Program (representatives from 21 Ontario universities) in Lindsay on Thursday, October 27 and to the College Information Program (representatives from 24 Ontario colleges) in Peterborough on Monday, October 31. Families may want to visit the Ontario Universities Fair in Toronto at the Metro Convention Centre October 14 – 16, which is a larger version of the gathering we will go to in Lindsay.

If you can manage them, visits to campuses are so valuable for helping students feel confident in their choices that a particular school “feels right.” Apply early: a completed application can easily be changed up until the respective deadlines.

University applications:

- Students will receive a PIN number to start the application process in late October or early November. The PINs are distributed at a lunch tutorial on how to apply.
- University application cost is \$125 for 3 program choices and \$42 for each additional choice.
- A university applicant who has applied by January 11, 2012 can change their selections until February 7, 2012. Changes after that will still be processed, but will receive later consideration from the universities.
- Applied degrees offered at colleges require six 4U/M courses like the universities, but are applied to through the college system. There are now 90 applied degree programs offering more practical job-related experience than a traditional university degree.

College applications:

- Students can begin the application process once the website ontariocolleges.ca posts next year's programs, but we encourage them to wait until after they have attended the lunchtime tutorial.
- College application cost is \$95 for 5 program choices. No more than 3 programs at any one college. It is not possible to add extra choices.
- College applications must be completed by February 1, 2012 to receive equal consideration for competitive programs. For non-competitive programs, late applications are not usually a problem, and are considered on a first-come, first-serve basis.

We encourage all students to have their applications completed before the Christmas holidays to avoid a last-minute rush and the risk of computer problems.

Academic success

Semester one is very important academically. The universities do not see the November marks; they will see the final marks after January exams. Since thirty percent of a course mark comes from the culminating assignment and/or exam at the end of the course, it is possible for a mark to change significantly, up or down, between midterm and final marks. (Colleges do see November marks, which is why they can make their first admission offers even before seeing January final marks.)

Now is a great time to encourage your student to continue or *improve* their study habits. Use a planner, meet regularly with a study group of other students in their course, break major assignments down into manageable chunks and set personal deadlines for the different stages to avoid last-minute stress. Our school's assignment policy requires that all summative assignments be handed in, with a 10% mark reduction and detentions for 4U students until their work is handed in. Making them more diligent about deadlines now will help them next year when no one chases them for missing work.

Admission offers

After the end of semester one, the school will forward final marks to the university and college application centres, for distribution to the institutions that your student has selected. Some students may receive early admission offers on the basis of their semester one and Grade 11 marks. For most students, the universities will wait for the March midterm marks for semester two before making admission offers. All offers will be conditional on successfully completing required courses and graduating from high school.

Financial options

Once your student has selected the universities or colleges to which they are applying, it's time to get serious about applying for scholarships and bursaries. Generally, scholarships are based on marks and bursaries on financial need. There are a number of websites with scholarship information, such as:

- www.studentawards.com We encourage all graduating students to register here to receive emails about scholarships, bursaries and contests for which they are eligible.
- www.canlearn.ca
- www.scholarshipscanada.com

Check college and university websites for information about scholarships and bursaries that require special applications. Major university admission awards often have application deadlines that are much earlier than students will receive admission offers. (Queen's University has a December deadline for major scholarships that is even before university applications need to be completed.) Some awards require nomination from the high school, so let the Guidance office know if your student is applying for such an award. Once your student has completed their online application, the selected schools will begin emailing with awards information, residence applications, etc... read it all. Those emails might be going into your junk mailbox, so watch for that and add the sender to your contacts.

Supplementary Application Forms

If your student's marks are near the minimum required for a program, it is very important that they complete the Supplementary Application that will be sent by the university. This form allows the student to explain why their marks are not completely representative of their potential, due to reasons such as work, sports, family circumstances, health, etc.

Other students have heard, why not mine?

University admission offers will come throughout the spring. As the first wave of students accept or decline offers, spaces become available for another wave of offers to go out. All applicants can expect a response by May 29/12 at the latest. No matter when they receive an offer, they can wait until June 1/12 to make a decision. And if your student hasn't been offered a spot by then, in early June they can see a list of university programs in which there is still space, and make a second application.

If your student is applying to college, the college will contact them directly with the offer of admission, but the student confirms their acceptance through the Ontario Colleges website. The earliest release of offers is February 1/12. Offers will continue to be issued until programs are filled or wait-lists are established. The college will specify an expiry date for the offer.

OSAP

Once a student receives an offer of admission from college or university, they can apply for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). We encourage all students to apply, as there is no charge for online applications, there is no obligation to actually take a loan if eligible, and there are some scholarships (such as the Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Tuition Scholarship) which are awarded only to OSAP applicants. There will be a speaker scheduled in the spring to help students with the application process. You can find more information now at www.osap.gov.on.ca

Any questions?

Mrs. Duchene and Mrs. Paton in the Guidance office are available to help students and parents/guardians navigate through this important process. Feel free to contact us with your questions or concerns.

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