

A High School
Plan for
Students with
College-Bound
Dreams

A High School
Plan for
Students with
College-Bound
Dreams

M Y C H A L W Y N N



A High School Plan for Students with College-Bound Dreams

A High School Plan for Students with College-Bound Dreams

First Edition

Reprint 1 2

ISBN-13: 978-1-880463-66-6

ISBN-10: 1-880463-66-0

Copyright © 2005 Mychal Wynn

Copyright © 2005 Rising Sun Publishing, Inc.

All rights reserved. Reproduction of the forms and activities by individual students and their parents is permitted. Reproduction by a school or school district is expressly prohibited and all excerpts or any other form of reproduction without expressed written permission from Rising Sun Publishing, Inc. is strictly prohibited except when quoted in brief reviews.

Disclaimers: The author, Mychal Wynn, or any of the content contained in this book should not in any way be construed as a representation or warranty that the reader will achieve this result. This book is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. The author and the publisher, however, make no representation or warranties of any kind with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the contents herein and accept no liability of any kind.

The poem, *Be The Captain of Your Ship* is reprinted from the book, *Don't Quit – Inspirational Poetry* copyright 1990 by Mychal Wynn.

Credits:

Cover design by Mychal Wynn.

Student Photographs taken by Mychal Wynn.

Illustrations by Mychal-David Wynn.

Stock Photographs by Fotosearch.

Reference sources for style and usage: *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage* and the *AP Stylebook, 2004*.



P.O. Box 70906

Marietta, GA 30007-0906

770.518.0369/800.524.2813

FAX 770.587.0862

E-mail: info@rspublishing.com

Web site: <http://www.rspublishing.com>

Printed in the United States of America.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my wife, Nina, who, as a wife, mother, confidant, and business partner has greatly contributed to the ideas contained within this book. She has put into practice the strategies as she has successfully guided our older son's oftentimes complex and frequently frustrating journey from preschool through high school, into his acceptance via Early Decision into Amherst College. She has also inspired, enlightened, and encouraged other children and their families along their parallel journeys from preschool into college.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Melvyn Bassett and Dr. Glenn Bascome for their insight, ideas, and editorial review. Charles and Donna McCord, Karen McCord, Dee Blassie, Monica Obey, Dawn Small, Diane Young, and the many parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators who have shared the information, ideas, insight, and inspiration reflected in this book.

A special thanks to Pastor Raymond LeBanc, Pastor RC Hall, Yusef Harris, Toni Douglas, Barbara Mabary, Frannie Benner, Jessica Appleyard, Madge Marie Marks, Jo-Ann Duvall, Dr. Jeanelle Brown, Nancy Paule, Oscar Robinson, Pat Archibald, Greg Potts, Ms. Rosaro, Pat Craven, Kinnan Johnston, Joyce Gist, Richard Kookan, Cher Walters, Cathy Robinson, Nancy Therrien, Julie Smith, Linda Santiago, Kelly Hoban, Johnetta Haugabrook, Mr. Miller, Bruce Green, Irene Seybold, Mike Bailey, Carole Bronzino, Michaelle Labranche, Bonnie Lee, Willie Vincent, Claudia Yvette Greene, Leovan Vera, Jan Gaylord, Megan Gloede, Debra Mosley, Dr. Vicki Ferguson, Barbara Dillas, Sushila Bassett, Earl Hart, Dale Butler, Suzanne Freed, Alphonso Carreker, Greg Jones, Duane Smith, Jim King, Wayne Miller, Ako Kambon, Eric Cork, Jean Polyne, Sharon Taylor, Tony Carpenter, Theresa Dean, Duane McDonald, Tommy Cho, the coaching staff of North Springs High School, and to all of our friends and relatives. My wife and I appreciate the contribution of each of you to the growth, development, and maturation of our older son as he has navigated the oftentimes difficulty road of early adolescence and emergence into manhood.

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to preschool, elementary, and middle school teachers who give children the social and academic foundation that nurtures their hopes and dreams. And, Reverend Kenneth Marcus, Reverend Cassandra Young Marcus, Reverend Wayland Conner, and the staff and members of Turner Chapel AME church in Marietta, Georgia, who encourage, support, develop, inspire, and celebrate young people and their dreams.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother and father who encouraged, sacrificed, and inspired me to become the first college graduate in our family.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my sons, Mychal-David and Jalani, the thousands of students and parents I meet each year who have college-bound hopes and aspirations, and to those who sacrifice each day on behalf of students and their dreams.

Table of Contents

<i>About the author</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>ix</i>
Overview: Who This Book is For	1
Section I: Academics	
Chapter 1: Academics	30
Chapter 2: High School Graduation Requirements	47
Chapter 3: Course Work	54
Chapter 4: Academic Support	83
Chapter 5: Academic Honors	89
Chapter 6: Plan Your Schedule	104
Chapter 7: Standardized Testing/Exit Exams	118
Section II: Extracurricular Activities	
Chapter 8: Extracurricular Activities	129
Section III: Personal Qualities	
Chapter 9: Personal Qualities	150
Section IV: Intangibles	
Chapter 10: Intangibles	158
Chapter 11: Your Essay	175
Section V: Application & Financial Aid	
Chapter 12: Financial Aid/Scholarships	188
Chapter 13: Your Application Package	199
Chapter 14: Senior Year	223
Glossary	231
References	255
College-related Web Sites	259
Appendix: College Literacy Quiz Answer Key	255
Index	267

About the author



Mychal Wynn was an unlikely college-bound student, having been expelled from Chicago's De La Salle Catholic High School and barely earning enough credits to graduate from Chicago's Du Sable High School. Even more miraculous was his being accepted into Northeastern University, at that time, the largest private university in the United States and the only college to which he applied. Without a mentor to advise him or the benefit of the type of college planning outlined in this book, he had not taken the required courses to be admitted directly from high school into college. He received a *conditional acceptance*—conditional upon his taking and passing classes in Physics and Calculus (courses which were not offered at his high school). As a result of his not having the opportunity to take the necessary classes in high school, his college dreams were deferred as he was required to enroll in Chicago's Kennedy-King Junior College for one semester in the fall of 1974. While working the night shift at the U.S. Post Office from 10:30 p.m. until 2:30 a.m., he took classes in Physics and Calculus during the day, receiving an 'A' in Physics and a 'B' in Calculus.

In January 1975, he boarded his first airplane as he flew from Chicago, Illinois to Boston, Massachusetts, where he entered into the Northeastern University College of Engineering. In June 1979, Mychal Wynn became his family's first college graduate, receiving his Bachelor of Science degree. This once unlikely college-bound student was a highly-recruited college graduate and has worked for such multinational companies as IBM and the Transamerica Corporation. In 1985, he and his wife, Nina, founded Rising Sun Publishing, where his wife serves as the Publisher and Chief Executive Officer and he serves as the principal trainer and Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Wynn is living his dreams as a husband, father, entrepreneur, and author of over 16 books. He, his wife, Nina, and their two sons, Mychal-David and Jalani, reside in Georgia.

Introduction

When our older son was in the first grade we were called in for a parent-teacher conference. His teacher was concerned with his lack of concentration and his continual failure to complete his class work. As an example, she showed my wife and me worksheets that were completely blank, with the exception of stick people running up the right side of the page, stick airplanes flying across the page, and stick people parachuting down the left side of the page. My wife and I, in collaboration with his classroom teacher, developed a series of strategies to not only get our son to complete more of his class work but to provide greater opportunities to nurture his passion for “stick people.”



Over the ensuing years, my wife and I developed the type of comprehensive plan contained in this book to help nurture our son’s passion for drawing while ensuring that he had a well rounded and rigorous academic schedule that provided a broad range of college opportunities. Subsequently, he not only had a choice of some of the country’s top-ranked art schools like the Savannah College of Art and Design and the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, he was a candidate for such Ivy League schools as Yale and Dartmouth, and was admitted into his first-choice, Amherst College.

Our younger son is now in the sixth grade and well into his college-bound plan. As a fifth-grader he visited several colleges and proclaimed, “I want to go to Yale” after listening to an admissions officer describe Yale’s residential philosophy of creating a family environment where the same students live together for their entire four years.

I have written this book because I believe that every student deserves to be nurtured in the pursuit of his or her dreams and if those dreams include college, then every student needs a plan. Those who need to quickly scan through the book or focus on important points should look for the hand symbol.



Foreword

Students and families may question, “Is 9th grade too early to begin planning for college? Is that something you do during your junior year [of high school]?” It is never too late to begin developing your college plan; however, it is also never too early! In some school districts your high school plan has already been greatly influenced by your elementary and middle school academic record or performance on standardized testing. For example, in one school district, a student must earn A’s and B’s in 4th and 5th grade to be placed into the AT (Academically Talented) middle school classes; in another school district, students’ 4th-grade CTBS (Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills) scores determine middle school math and science placement; and, in another school district, placement into the Talented and Gifted program is determined by students’ 3rd-grade ITBS (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills) scores.

Your 6th-grade math placement may have already determined the highest level of math you will be able to take in high school! As you enter into the 9th grade, the scope of the colleges and the majors to which you will be able to apply may have already been determined. A student interested in studying engineering in college may have had the opportunity to take Pre-Algebra (6th grade), Algebra I (7th grade), Geometry (8th grade), and four years of high school math that may include Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus, and AP Statistics. Good grades in such classes will put a student on track to apply to a broad range of colleges and universities, whereas the student who does not enroll into advanced math until the 9th grade will have very different course selections (e.g., Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Algebra III/Trigonometry), which may not meet some colleges’ admissions requirements.

In addition to the academic schedule available to students based on their performance in elementary school, many families find that to ensure they have enough money set aside to contribute to a student’s college tuition, room, and board (which may amount to tens of thousands of dollars each year of college) they have to begin saving for college BEFORE their children enter preschool or before their children are even born!

Some may ask, “Why all of this fuss about college planning? I know people who did not graduate from college and they have good jobs?” In today’s competitive workplace the quality of your education will enhance your ability to follow your dreams and enter into the type of career that you really want. As a young person growing up in the 21st century, you have much to encourage you. There are more jobs and career opportunities for college graduates than there are people to fill them. Every year, companies and organizations throughout the world have to recruit teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, policemen, business managers, hotel workers, computer technicians, and bankers. Opportunities are everywhere and you must consider yourself more than just a resident of your local community, town, city, state, or country. An education opens up the gateway to the world—to opportunities that will be yours—if you are qualified to pursue them! The opportunities for college graduates are virtually endless!

There are many books and resources that can help you to make a decision on choosing a college. There are, for example, reviews and rankings of colleges and universities by *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Reports*, *The Princeton Review*, *The Kaplan College Guide*, international publications, and Internet web sites. You also have your parents, middle school and high school counselors, and many private agencies to assist you in making your college choice based on your interests and career aspirations.

This book, the second in the College Planning series, provides guidance through the high school years to assist you, the student, or parents, teachers, counselors, coaches, and mentors in developing a high school plan that will make you a strong candidate for admissions into a top college and prepared to succeed once you get there. Following the advice and strategies outlined will help to ensure that a student’s dreams of attending college will not be delayed, deferred, or destroyed, as a result of not knowing how to maximize his or her opportunities by taking advantage of the wide range of programs and opportunities available during the high school years.

As this book was being written, the author’s older son played varsity football and ran the 400 Meter on his high school varsity track and field team. Not many high school track and field athletes choose to run the 400 Meter. It is a tough race that requires sprinting ability and endurance. A successful race requires a good game plan, i.e., a strong start during

the first 20 meters, sprinting while pacing yourself through the next 80 meters, breaking into a steady stride through the 200-meter mark, using your momentum to carry you around the curve through the 300-meter mark, and conserving enough energy to carry you into a full sprint during the final 100 meters.

Pursuing your dreams of attending college is going to require sprinting, steadying your pace, endurance, and a strong finish. If you are diligent at following the steps outlined in each chapter, completing the high school-planning worksheets, responsibly doing your schoolwork, and making a notable contribution to your high school and local community, you will be on your way to a successful high school experience. In addition, you will develop a strong foundation that will prepare you for college success.

Remember that part of your planning must include financing the cost of college tuition, room, and board. You and your parents must begin this aspect of college preparation as soon as possible, if you have not already done so. There are hundreds of scholarships, fellowships, grants, and low-interest loans available to assist young people in the pursuit of their college-bound dreams.

If you have a passion or talent in areas such as academics, sports, art, music, writing, public speaking, dance, drama, or automotive mechanics you must continue to explore every opportunity to showcase and develop your talent. Today's passion may become tomorrow's career or it may be the means of paying your way through college—the route taken by many students who have received scholarships to college because of their academic attainments, sporting abilities, creative or artistic talent, or their noteworthy contribution to their school or community.

There is an enormous amount of information, as well as many opportunities and support programs to pave the way for any student to attend college. In essence, there are no excuses!

Mychal Wynn

Author

Educational Consultant

Glenn Bascome, Ed.D.

Director/Dame Marjorie Bean Education Center

Sandys Secondary Middle School

Somerset, Bermuda

A High School
Plan for
Students with
College-Bound
Dreams

O verview

American higher education offers more colleges than any other system in the world, with more variety in disciplines and professional training, but a student who doesn't like the school she chose for her first year can, assuming she keeps her grades up, easily transfer. High school students who bite their tongues and actually listen to what college counselors say on this matter will learn that being crowned by Ivy has little, if any, bearing on whether they will fulfill their dreams of love, power and wealth. Character traits—such as persistence, optimism and honesty—established long before anyone takes the SAT or the ACT—are far more crucial.

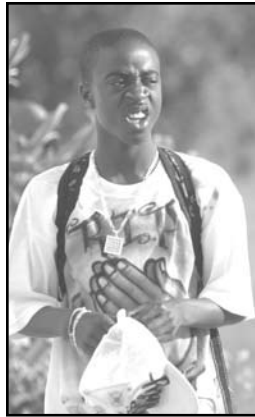
— [Newsweek: How to Get into College, 2001 Edition]

Who This Book is For

First and foremost, as the title implies, this book has been written for students with college-bound dreams. While thousands of students affirm college-bound dreams, far too many are not aware of the importance of using their four years of high school to prepare for college, make themselves a competitive candidate in the admissions process, or do what is necessary to acquire enough financial aid to pay the huge cost of college tuition, room, and board.

Within this group of students are highly-motivated young people who are enrolled in all honors and AP classes and yet have no extracurricular activities or community service to supplement their stellar academic credentials; students who are involved in sports and extracurricular activities but who are taking the easiest possible academic schedule (and still putting forth only enough effort to be 'C' students); and students who are saying they plan to go to college but who do not have any idea as to what is needed, how much work

Notes:



is involved, or how to prepare themselves to succeed should they successfully navigate the many hurdles of meeting their high school graduation requirements and admission criteria to a major college or university.

No matter which group of students you fall into, where you want to go to college, where your parent(s) want you to go to college, or where your counselors, coaches, aunts, uncles, mentors, or best friends are encouraging you to go to college, this book has been written to assist you or those who are supporting and encouraging you in the pursuit of your college-bound dreams.

What This Book is Going To Do



This book is designed to work hand-in-hand with the *workbook*. Together, they will outline what you need to do and allow you to track your progress during your four years of high school. They will also assist you in developing your plan by outlining what information you should ask for at your high school, gather from other books, and research on the Internet. Parents or mentors who are supporting you will better understand the type of questions they should ask and discussions they should have with your high school guidance counselor, who is perhaps the most important source of information in developing your high school schedule and college-bound plan.

This, the first chapter, is an overview of what follows. The remaining chapters are designed to help you develop or fine tune your college-bound plans. While this book will provide an ongoing



reference, the *workbook* provides the worksheets to set goals, track progress, gather important information, and organize yourself for the big day when you prepare your college application packages.

If you are a ninth-grader, you are probably more concerned with making friends, finding your way around, finding your niche (the group of people with whom you will begin identifying), and your clique (the group of people with whom you socialize) than you are with putting together your college plan. However, you must do both—enjoy your high school experience while at the same time remain focused on your college-bound plan.

The three primary areas of focus for a college-bound student are:

1. Meeting your high school graduation requirements.
2. Becoming a strong candidate for admissions to your first-choice colleges and being prepared to succeed academically once you get there.
3. Meeting your EFC (Expected Family Contribution) for college tuition, room, and board.



There will be two additional areas of focus for the recruited college-bound athlete:

4. Registering with the NCAA Clearinghouse and meeting the NCAA qualifications for a student-athlete.
5. Developing an athletic profile/portfolio specific to your sport.

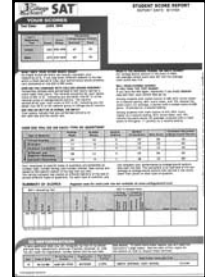
The primary purpose of this book is number two, *Becoming a strong candidate for admissions to your first-choice college and being prepared to succeed academically once you get there*. There are four broad categories, that will ultimately, determine how successful you are in developing your college-bound plan.

Notes:

Notes:

Section I: Academics

- Meeting high school graduation requirements
- Meeting college admission standards
- Course work
- Grades
- Class rank
- High School Profile
- SAT I, SAT II, ACT, and AP exam scores
- Awards, honors, noteworthy academic achievements and recognition

**Section II: Extracurricular Activities**

- Sports
- Clubs
- Student organizations
- Community service
- Volunteer hours
- Work experience

**Section III: Personal Qualities**

- Essay
- Interview
- Recommendations
- Contribution to your school community
- Unique artistic, musical, athletic, mathematical, or public speaking talent
- Personal achievements, e.g., overcoming adversity, resiliency, integrity, worthy ideals, or innovation

**Section IV: Intangible and Other Influencing Factors**

- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Socioeconomic background

- Geographical area
- Involvement in a club or activity for which the college has a unique need, e.g., genius-level I.Q., classical pianist, point guard, martial arts instructor, swimmer, or 400-meter sprinter

The chapters that follow are organized into these four sections followed by a fifth and final section outlining the all-important process of preparing your admissions package:

Section V: Application & Financial Aid

Parents who already have children in college and students with older siblings or relatives who have gone to college will have a clear advantage over students who are the first in their family to attend college. Students from private schools, where counselors have smaller student-counselor ratios, will have an advantage over public school students where counselors are responsible for working with several hundred students. Despite such advantages or disadvantages, every student will benefit from a plan and every parent will benefit from developing college preparations to reduce the stress and increase the joy of a student's four years of high school.

Developing your high school plan will require that you make a favorable impression in as many areas of the admissions criteria as possible. In essence, your application package must provide an admissions officer, whom you do not know, enough information about your academic potential, character, and ability to contribute to his or her school community that he or she is willing to recommend to an admissions committee that you be accepted into the



College Literacy Quiz

Notes:

1. What are AP and IB courses?
2. When are AP exams given and what scores typically qualify for college credit?
3. Who administers the AP and IB Programs?
4. What does the 'weight,' of such courses mean?
5. Is the Ivy League an athletic or academic grouping of colleges?
6. How many colleges make up the Ivy League?
7. What does HBCU stand for?
8. How many HBCUs are there?
9. What is the difference between the SAT I, SAT II, and the ACT and what is the top score for each exam?
10. How many times can you take the SAT I and ACT?
11. Which type of high school classes will best prepare you for success on the Critical Reading and Writing Sections of the SAT I?
12. What advantage, if any, is there to taking the SAT I or ACT more than once?
13. What does PSAT stand for and in which grade (i.e., 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th) do the scores qualify students as National Merit or National Achievement Scholars?
14. What does GPA mean?
15. What is a weighted GPA?

Notes:

16. With what organization does a college-bound athlete have to register?
17. What is the significance of taking classes for high school credit while in middle school?
18. What is joint enrollment?
19. What is the significance of taking advanced math classes in middle school?
20. What is the most important academic skill that colleges want incoming students to demonstrate?
21. Does a student from a top private school have a significantly better chance of being admitted to college over a student from an average public high school?
22. What are complimentary sports and how can they increase your college admissions opportunities?
23. Will being a top academic achiever and having high SAT I/ACT scores guarantee that you will be accepted into the college of your choice?
24. Will average grades and average SAT I/ACT scores guarantee that you will not be accepted into the college of your choice?
25. Who is a legacy student?
26. What is FAFSA, why is it important, and when should you complete it?
27. What is EFC?
28. What is Need-based–Need-blind admissions?
29. What is an articulation agreement?
30. How many colleges can a student apply to under the Early Decision program?

What You Have to Do

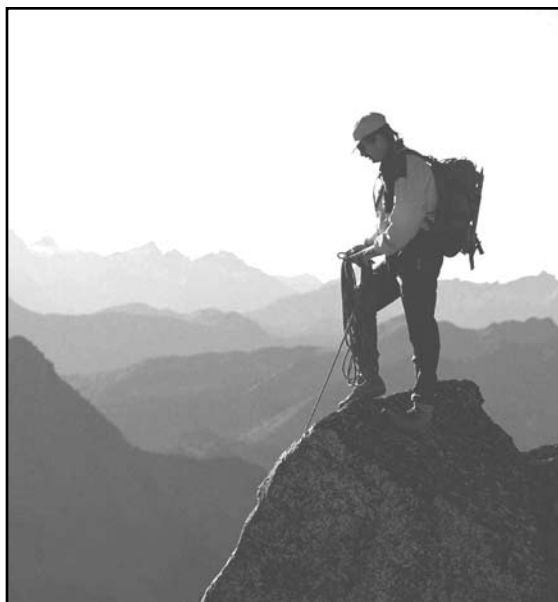
Notes:

All of the information contained within this book, resources and web sites to which you will be referred, and ideas and strategies are directed toward the singular mission of attending and graduating from college. As you progress through the book, refer to the *workbook* and complete the forms and track your grades and test scores. As a high school student you do not have to have a perfect plan. You do not have to know what you want to study, what career you want to pursue, or even what you aspire to do after graduating from college. You do, however, need a general sense of the type of college experience you want and the amount of work you are willing to do.



Begin with the End in Mind

What are your dreams and aspirations—the places you want to go, things you want to experience, changes you want to make in your home, community, or in the world itself? Where do you find your joy? What type of people do you prefer being around? What type of job would you do even if you did not get paid to do it? Or, better yet, what is your purpose? Are you passionate about music, art, science, math, sports, or social issues? Do you prefer working with people or in isolation? Do you have a passion to coach on the field or run front-office operations? Do you have a passion to teach elementary school children or inspire college students? Would you prefer to write a book, give a lecture, or both?

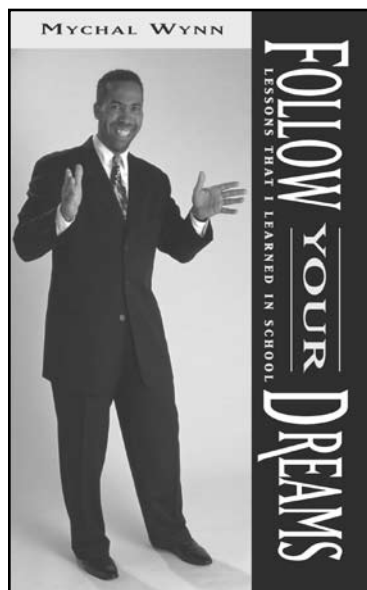


Notes:

Answering such questions as you enter high school will help you to identify the classes that will expand your knowledge, nurture your passions, and best prepare you for the college experience you are interested in pursuing.

Answering such questions will also greatly enhance your college search as you begin looking for and focusing on colleges that will provide you with the opportunity to pursue your dreams and aspirations. While many students think in terms of attending their “dream college,” you will be on your way to attending the “college that will help you to pursue your dreams.”

In the book, *Follow Your Dreams: Lessons That I Learned in School*, I share my experiences growing up in poverty and



the academic, social, and emotional struggles experienced from elementary through high school. I thought you went to college so you could get a good job. Subsequently, I entered college in the pursuit of a career (electrical engineering). However, a college education enabled me to do more than just get a job, it enabled me to discover and pursue my second-grade passion—writing and talking! If I had known that my elementary school passions could have become my career, I would

have chosen different high school classes, a different college major, and explored a much broader range of colleges and universities.

Your dreams, and the colleges that may best help you to pursue those dreams should guide your efforts in planning your high school schedule of classes, extracurricular activities, and involvement in student and community organizations.

Your Life List

Notes:

In the book, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, there is the story of a young boy, who, at fifteen years old sat down at his kitchen table in Los Angeles, California, and wrote three words at the top of a yellow pad: 'My Life List.' On his Life List, John Goddard, an adventurer and explorer, wrote 127 goals. On the following pages is this fifteen-year-old's list of his 127 life goals. Few people would create such a list; fewer yet would even know the type of things that are on the list. However, all of us, perhaps not as extensively, can develop our own life list.

After reviewing this comprehensive and extensive list, take a moment to reflect on what your life list would be. Use the following questions to guide you:

1. What would you like to explore?
2. What would you like to study?
3. Where would you like to visit?
4. What would you like to accomplish?

After answering such questions and developing your own life list, try to answer the following:

What type of college experience would help you to pursue the things on your list?