

Advice to Seniors 2011: NHS Scholarship Winners Speak

In a survey of the winners of the 2011 NHS Scholarships, this group of outstanding NHS seniors were asked A. what recommendations they would have for seniors regarding how to successfully complete their senior year and B. how to survive the college application process. Their responses are provided for you below.

To seniors: Do not succumb to Senioritis! So many people give up in their last semester of college. You have worked so hard; don't ruin your record in your last year. College admissions appreciate students who have improved in their senior year or performed well all throughout high school.

Selecting a college: Different methods of research work for different personalities, but for me the best thing was to come up with integral traits I was looking for in colleges and then base my research on which schools fit and which didn't. From this checklist, I decided which schools to visit. The visit is so important. Some places you will know right away that it's not right. Wait to tell your parents until after the tours; they tend to be a little upset if you tell them "no way" in the first five minutes.

Lastly, search for scholarships on credible websites and apply for lots of them! Put time into your applications and you will see results. Try not to get discouraged. In dealing with admissions, use the colleges' websites to your advantage, talk to people who attend the schools, and don't be afraid to negotiate your financial aid with the colleges.

Enjoy every minute of your last year of high school! It flies by.

Never pass up any opportunity. Make sure to do your work first, like homework and applications, before you do anything else. If you get the opportunity to apply early, definitely do it. Make a resume to go off of when filling out applications. Apply to all schools you may want to go to so you don't lose the opportunity.

Think ahead! When you see a deadline and think "Psh, I've got time!" you are WRONG because I guarantee something will consume your time at the very moment the deadline has arrived! You must ALWAYS be two steps ahead of the game. Never look back and doubt what you just did. If you apply to 6 schools, then be confident in those 6 schools that they all have something different to offer you and that no matter what, one of them is the right fit for you.

Also - seek advice and help. You must use other people as your pillar to lean on during this extremely stressful and chaotic time. Senior year goes by way too fast and if you aren't strapped in your seat, then you'll be thrown for a loop. I would say to read any magazine, any online forum, and any website that gives tips on what to look for in a college. They will truly guide you in evaluating what the most important factors are for you personally in finding a good fit.

The perfect college is there - just be patient and practice that essay writing. Continually critique your work until it is above your satisfaction. If you need to create 3-4 drafts, then so be it because these places are trying to reward you for the work you have already put in, so don't waste their time by creating a sloppy portfolio for them to view.

Do not procrastinate!
<p>A. Become involved in your senior year and learn how to balance your life. You are only a senior once and involving yourself in school is so important. When you are applying to colleges, running organizations, and enjoying senior year you will truly learn to prioritize. Learning to prioritize is key in having a successful senior year. Managing senior year can be tough, but its so fun in the end.</p> <p>B. You have to find a college that is right for you in all areas- academics, environment, location, size... Once you find that college don't be afraid to call and talk with admissions reps or the financial aid office. If you put forth effort and energy, everything will work out for you in the end. Just remember, when one door closes another one opens, and who knows the opening door could be the key to your future success.</p>
You can't start early enough in preparing. Think about the learning environment you want in college, and look for those when you visit. If possible, visit as many campuses as you are able to. Keep track of every volunteer thing you did. Most of all, have fun your last year and finish strong.
Listen to what people tell you! When it comes to school, 90% (if not more) of the advice you hear is worth following.
Start early
<p>A. If you have any extra time in a class use it to work on homework or scholarships instead of socializing with your friends. This will help you get things done faster; therefore, you will have time to hang out with your friends after school and on the weekends.</p> <p>B. If there is any college you are possibly considering, go ahead and apply. Then, you will be able to find more scholarships that you would not have known about otherwise.</p>
<p>I would advise seniors to stay focused on senior year and prioritize all their school work and activities.</p> <p>As far as college admission, students should spend plenty of time with essays, letters of recommendation and studying colleges. This is extremely important.</p>
Stay organized!!! When doing applications keep a hard copy of each application and also keep an electronic copy of essays. Name the computer documents with the word count and the subject. You can reuse them this way.

<p>The best advice I could give is to start early finding out about the colleges you are considering and about scholarships you could achieve to reach your dreams. Enjoy this year and don't wish it away too soon. This is the year I found out the most about myself and who I want to be.</p>
<p>A. Seniors should not be so ready to get out and go to college. They need to stay focused during their senior year and enjoy every moment, even with all the extra pressures of tests, classes, and scholarships. They should also make a balance of fun and school. Organization is also key. Keep your scholarships and other things in order of due dates. I tried to complete every scholarship or essay at least a week early so that I could have teachers read over essays and resumes for mistakes.</p> <p>B. The best way to negotiate the college admissions planning process is using that college's website and finding out your advisor or counselor that represents your region for that college. Also, if your school has a career center, you should use that facility as much as possible.</p>
<p>Start preparing the summer before. Have an essay written to submit to colleges. Also, take college visits over the summer and get the applications early. Submit applications early to get quicker results.</p>
<p>I recommend them to manage their time wisely because it goes quickly. Also, try to work out a college prep class to offer seniors in high school.</p>
<p>Take every opportunity that comes along. Do everything you are in and go as far with it as possible. High school is a chance to do everything once and figure out what you really love.</p>
<p>Simply, I would advise seniors to start early on this process and to keep a well documented file of everything they send out and of all correspondence that they receive.</p>
<p>Keep yourself motivated. Don't drop activities or classes to have an easy senior year; if you start the year ready to leave, you will only become more bored as it progresses. Choose all of your safety schools, matches, and reaches carefully. Make sure you visit as many as you can, and that you would be happy at any of them (especially your safeties, because you may well end up at one of them). Also, start your college essays early, and accept the choices that you've made over your high school career, rather than trying to improve yourself as an applicant at the last minute.</p>

I would tell them to fill out their applications in the summer before school starts. It is difficult to manage all the homework that comes with senior year AND fill out all the college applications. Most importantly, HAVE FUN and learn as much as you possibly can because senior year is gone before you know it! Do what you love, and if you don't love it, LEAVE IT!
Make lists of everything, keep track of deadlines, and set goals to accomplish each month. Start early and explore your options for college. Search for scholarships. There are a ton [of scholarships] out there that can be won. Two hours of work is nothing if you consider the benefits of winning a scholarship.
I would recommend them to manage their time effectively and be organized.
Get ahead of the game. Start applying for schools early and you are that much more likely to be accepted and don't just go to the school with the most popular name either. Find a college that suits you best and be involved in activities on campus.
A. Have fun, but be sure to finish strong and endure it. B. Get started early, it will give you more time to make decisions and know what to do.
Use your time wisely.
Take your senior year seriously. Work hard, go above and beyond in everything you do. Do as much on your own and never just do the minimum to get by with a good grade. Learn for the sake of learning, not merely for an A in a class.
Be yourself. When you write a zillion essays, losing yourself among the words sometimes happens. Remember that you're writing about yourself; don't just write what you think the admissions officers want to hear, since that's most often wrong and very uncharacteristic.
A. Senior should not just take easy classes because they are tired of trying; taking the most challenging classes is the key to success. Also, seniors should not give in to senioritis; they should try their best the entire year, the whole way through. B. Students should start looking for colleges and thinking about the sort of college they are interested in attending long before their senior year rolls around. Even if they still have no idea what they want, the more college visits the plan, the more schools they can rule out.

Feel free to quit something if you don't like it. Too many of my friends stuck with a sport or arts activity even though, entering senior year, they knew they wouldn't have much fun in the extracurricular. Seniors feel this strong sense of duty about their activities. They shouldn't!

A. Make sure to fit in some time for fun. When you're to a point that you can't focus on your homework for one night, get some sleep, but don't let other people influence your decisions. Be you and stay true.

B. Start applications ASAP. Apply for every single scholarship you are eligible for.

A. Focus, focus, focus. As a senior it is very easy to get distracted by friends, work, or other things, but you are still first and foremost a student. It is very tempting to put everything--homework, college admissions essays, scholarship applications--off until the last minute, but doing so will only cause you unnecessary stress in the middle of a very stressful year. If you don't focus on getting things done, senior year is going to be a nightmare. If you get things out of the way in a controlled, organized manner, your life will be so much easier.

B. Start early. Putting things off will only cause you pain. You think the essays your dream school requires are tough now? Imagine how they'll look at 11:00 the night before they're due. Start your search, your application, and your decision-making process as early as possible. If you start figuring out where you want to apply early, you'll be able to spread out the applications. If you do your application a month before it's due rather than a week before, you'll have more time to fine-tune it and make it perfect. If you decide where you want to go early on, you can relieve yourself of that piece of stress before May 1st rolls around and focus on your probably-increasing workload rather than where you're going. If you get the chance, consider applying under a non-binding Early Action program, where you turn in your application in November and get a response in December. I was accepted to my first-choice school under one of these programs, and it made the rest of the application process so much less stressful because I knew I already had a place to go--I didn't need to apply to a "safety school" or cast my net wide to be sure of getting in somewhere. It requires you to get on top of things earlier, but it's totally worth it.

Do not procrastinate in filling out college applications or scholarship applications.

Always do your best to try and get the highest scores you can, even if your social life has to be put on the back burner. Getting high grades will thus give you a better chance at getting into the college of your dreams. It is best to start on college applications as early as possible, possibly even in the summer, so that you may have the most time during your senior year to focus on other things, such as grades or calling college admissions officers.

Start your college applications in the summer!
<p>A. Prioritize your schedule and don't take on too many extra jobs, activities, etc, that can add to the already intense stress of senior year.</p> <p>B. Take advantage of all scholarship opportunities because there is a lot of free money that is just waiting to be used by deserving students.</p>
<p>A. Try your best to not get distracted by social media (i.e. Facebook) and turn off your cell phone when doing your homework.</p> <p>B. Take standardized tests early, make sure you take PLENTY of practice tests on your own, timing yourself. Besides standardized tests, find something that you really enjoy and do your best to exceed at it. Basically, find your passion and show colleges that you are passionate about something.</p>
I waited too late to begin to explore colleges. Rising seniors should be urged earlier in their high school career to begin to look for their "best fit" college.
<p>A.) I am one of the worst procrastinators around (that's probably an exaggeration) so I would definitely recommend getting assignments done in a timely manner rather than last minute. My other piece of advice is to not worry too much. Sure, a little bit of stress can be healthy, but if you find yourself stressed beyond management than you just need to take the time to refuel and refocus your work. If you are in a constant state of panic, than the great work you could do will turn into something you didn't do.</p> <p>B.) I got almost no financial aid from colleges so that is one area that I can't be of much help. But where I can be helpful is the application process. Honestly, be yourself. I have constantly had people tell me what I should write about and how I should write. But I knew that their way of writing wasn't my way. So I took what they said into consideration but wrote how I wanted to write. They wanted me to write as someone looking for world peace and who lived for community service. I ended up writing about a history project from freshman year and about how I walk incredibly fast. No matter what others want you to say, the college admissions offices want to see who you really are so make sure you show them the real you and not just a facade.</p>
<p>A. Make a list of all the colleges you want to apply to and write down everything you need to turn in to that college. Also, keep a list of scholarships. Make copies of everything you turn in!!!!</p> <p>B. Turn in everything early. Apply to all colleges that you might be considering and apply for every scholarships possible at those schools!</p>

Time management is a key part of being successful. Try to be involved in as many things as possible while keeping your sanity and not being overloaded. Volunteer frequently, it looks good on resumes and the experiences will change you for the better. But most importantly; HAVE FUN.

Senior year is a time to have fun, but find a good balance between friends and school work. College must be your main focus. If you finish high school strong, your rank will rise and you will be able to focus on scholarships and college applications in your spare time. You must MAKE time to apply for every opportunity out there and I wish you all the best of luck!

A. Be involved but also be organized. If you are the leader of a club make a special notebook so you don't forget important things you have to do.
B. Make friends with your Guidance department. Write down questions and they will be more than happy to assist with the college process, that's what they are there for!

A. Get an excellent calendar and don't waste time!!!
B. Only apply for schools you absolutely want to attend. Do not apply to colleges you have no interest in out of fear.

A. Definitely create a schedule of when, where, and how you will participate in an array of activities and stick to the schedule for the whole year (or the time you have committed to each activity). Also, do not procrastinate in school, and make sure to keep your grades up.
B. Look into colleges that offer the type of education you are most committed to, and if you do not have an idea in particular about a future career, play on your strengths. Look into programs and activities offered by each college, because after all, college is what you make out of it.

Senior year in my opinion is the most challenging year in high school. Scholarships, college applications, and school academics will be the three most important things to focus on. As you become a senior, be prepared and well organize. Good organization and communication skill will help any senior in the most challenging obstacles. In order to manage senior year effectively, you must know your own weaknesses and strengths because that way you will understand the things that are good and influential for you and those that are not.

On the other hand, to plan for college admissions the student must acknowledge his or her interests and have passion for them. Have your personal statement proofread by others, especially your friends and an English teacher. Complete a short resume that summarize who you are to the readers. Be prepared for interviews because you will have multiples from colleges and scholarship organizations. Most importantly, remember to enjoy your senior year because it will be one of the best years of your life.

A. Time management is key. When you have homework, admissions applications, scholarship applications, etc. to work on all at once, it can be overwhelming. If you tell yourself you will do a little each day and plan out your time effectively, you can handle it all.

B. Keep in touch with admissions counselors. They are happy to answer questions or sit down and talk about the school you are looking at. Also, visit schools multiple times. Each time you go, you may find things that you really like or maybe that you don't like. I think that doing multiple visits to a school you are thinking of attending is a great way to find out if you actually like it or not.

Especially as a twelve-season athlete, managing my time was a struggle. I had practices and games to focus on, plus homework on top of it. My motto was, "Work first, play later." I used every minute of my study periods, and made sure all my homework was complete before I turned on any sort of technology. Often I had to give up my weekends to work ahead and study for tests in the upcoming week. As to college admissions, start early. I applied to my college during the summer and then started searching for scholarships. Starting early allowed me to take my time, correct any errors, and make sure what I was turning in was entirely accurate.

Get organized by purchasing a calendar you can keep on you to organize your schedule; time management skills help out a lot.

It's easy to get caught up in ever so popular "senioritis". I admit I was a victim, however letting your focus falter and your effort decrease is something you should try your best to void. This is much easier said than done, so just try to remember that if you work hard this year your work ethic will continue to flourish when you start college or whatever other endeavors you plan on pursuing.

To rising seniors I would say: Manage your time well! Everything is to the respect of time, if you do not put things off, it is much easier to stay on track and less stressed.

Remember: These comments come from proven winners – successful students from all over the country whose lives are very similar yours. We hope all of our Honor Society members reading here will take to heart some good ideas found in these comments. Good luck.