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CONSISTENTLY CLIMBING

Midland reports consecutive years of record enrollment

BY NOAH JOHNSON
Fremont Tribune

Midland University is reporting record enrollment records for the third consecutive year.

The university announced a total enrollment of 1,572 students for the 2020-21 school year, a nearly 12% increase from the previous year. The university also enrolled a record 370 freshmen for the 2020-21 year.

Merritt Nelson, vice president for enrollment management and marketing, said the school's record enrollment represents an opportunity for Midland to impact more lives on campus.

"By us having that opportunity to educate more students, to help form them in the most formidable time in their life, gives us a bigger opportunity to help our communities, to help mold society and to help change the world," Nelson said. "In the greatest sense, having more students on campus allows us to carry out our mission."

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't impact the school's enrollment numbers, according to Nelson. In reality, he said the pandemic may have helped boost the university's enrollment.

Midland spends the majority of the fall recruiting students for the upcoming year. Nelson said that meant COVID-19 didn't present any challenges to the university until the spring, around the time when the university is focused on getting students to commit to Midland.

"We had been building relationships with them and we knew who they were," Nelson said. "Our challenge was going to be, 'how do we get them to commit in an uncertain time?'"

While other universities may have struggled to transition and shift focus in the midst of the pandemic, Nelson said that wasn't the case for Midland.

"There's just not a lot of bureaucracy," he said. "We can pivot quickly. We can make a decision in a matter of days and implement it and I think that gives us a competitive advantage."

Nelson said the university was able to use



NOAH JOHNSON, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Students walking through campus on the first day of classes at Midland University.

the pandemic and turn it into an opportunity by providing "innovative recruiting strategies" to bring in new students.

Those strategies included implementing virtual visits within a matter of days that Nelson described as robust and engaging. It also allowed the university to market its virtual visits on a national scale.

Nelson said around 150 of the students who enrolled in the 2020-21 school year did so without ever visiting the campus in-person.

"We were able to leverage COVID-19, although a crisis, although a pandemic, although a hard global situation, and use it to our advantage to help students through

that time and to get more students here," he said.

From an administrative perspective, Nelson said the record numbers affirm the university's mission.

"I think it means that we have the right people in place, we have the right mission and we have the right vision," Nelson said.



Campus Visit Questions

Want to find the right fit for college? Visit the colleges that interest you, and ask LOTS of questions while you're there.

Ask the admissions representative:

1. What are admission requirements and deadlines?
2. What is the cost of tuition, fees, room & board, and books?
3. What are housing options? Will I be required to live on campus? Is there a wait list? Are meal plans required?
4. What is the average class size? Are classes taught by professors or graduate assistants?
5. I don't know what I plan to study yet; how easy is it to change majors?
6. What are "general education" requirements?
7. How easy is it to transfer credits from a community college?
8. Is there an honors program and how do you qualify?
9. Is there a campus career center? Are internships available? Job placement services?
10. Are there study-abroad opportunities?
11. What percentage of students return after their freshman year?
12. What percentage of students graduate and what is the average length of study?
13. How diverse is the student population?
14. What percentage of students are commuters?
15. What is the student vs. faculty ratio?
16. What kind of tutoring/support systems does the college have?

Note: If you have a disability, ask to meet with the school's disability services coordinator.

Questions about student safety:

1. Is there an on-campus health clinic? (Tip: Ask your insurance provider if the campus clinic is "in-network.")
2. Where do you refer students who have a serious medical issue?
3. How safe is the campus, and what security systems are in place?

Ask your student tour guide or a current student:

Student life:

1. Why did you select this school?
2. Are the professors accessible?
3. How easy or hard was it to get the classes you wanted?
4. How many hours a day or week do you study?
5. What kind of tutoring/support systems does the college have?

Ask the financial aid counselor:

1. What applications are required for scholarships and financial aid, and what are the deadlines?
2. Are academic and departmental scholarships available?
3. Will scholarships from other donors affect the amount of aid I receive from the college?
4. What types of payment plans does the college offer?
5. Can I get a refund if I have to drop a class or drop out suddenly?

Campus life:

1. What is the Greek system like?
2. Where have you lived on campus?
3. Can freshmen have cars on campus? What is the fee for parking on campus?
4. How easy is it to get around on campus? Can I walk anywhere I want to go? Is there a free campus shuttle?
5. What do students do on weekends? What did you do last weekend?
6. What are the big campus traditions? Do a lot of students go to athletic events?
7. What kinds of activities, intramural sports or clubs are popular on campus?
8. Is there a campus recreation center for students?
9. How is the food in the dining halls? What are the hours?

Life off campus:

1. How easy is it to get to places if you don't have a car? Are bikes a good option?
2. Is there a grocery store nearby?

Ask YOURSELF after your campus visit:

1. Was the campus a good size for me?
2. How were the residence halls? Too loud or too quiet? How large were the rooms? Was I comfortable with the level of security?
3. Is there enough to do on and off campus?

Additional questions for a visit to a community college:

1. Will I be required to take placement exams? If so, what are they?
2. What is the two-year graduation rate?
3. Tell me about your academic transfer program.
4. Do you have student housing? Is there a wait list?



Getting Started

Before you decide what college to attend, explore careers you may want to pursue.

This will help you find schools that fit your career interests and goals. Follow these steps:

1. Think about your interests & skills

Ask your school counselor about interest or skills assessments offered at your school.

You can also use the free Career Cruising assessment at an EducationQuest location.

You'll find free online assessments at:

- NebraskaCareerConnections.org
- MyNextMove.org
- BigFuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers

2. Match your interests and skills with potential careers

■ Participate in activities that match your career interests such as school clubs, community service, job shadowing, internships, and part-time jobs.

■ Get involved in a career academy or coursework if available at your school.

■ Learn about high-wage, high-demand, and high-skill jobs in Nebraska by visiting H3.ne.gov.

■ Use Reality Check at EducationQuest.org to determine if your potential career choice will provide the future lifestyle you desire.

Source: EducationQuest Foundation



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- + Nebraska's Largest Athletic Department
- + Midland 1:1 Digital Experience, Providing iPads for Every Undergraduate Student
- + 100% of students receive a Scholarship



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Finding the **Right College**

1. Research colleges

Start by asking your school counselor for college-search advice and resources.

Here are other things you can do:

- Talk to admissions representatives when they visit your high school.
- Use College Profiles at EducationQuest.org to match colleges with your interests.
- Another good resource is BigFuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges.
- Attend a College Fair or Educational Planning Program where you can talk to college representatives (live or virtual). See Upcoming Events at EducationQuest.org.
- Explore the websites of colleges that interest you.

2. Go on campus visits

This is the most important step you can take to determine if a school is the right fit for you!

- Start your visits in the spring of your junior year and revisit your top choices in the fall of your senior year.
- Contact the admissions office at least two weeks in advance to schedule a campus visit.
- Visit while school is in session. You won't get the full campus experience during school breaks, finals week, or summer.
- Meet with an admissions representative and financial aid counselor to discuss how to apply and pay for college.
- Ask to meet with faculty in your areas of interest.
- If you can't visit a college, check their website for a virtual tour.

3. Narrow your college choices

After you've done your research and gone on campus visits, it's time to compare notes and pick your top college choices. Compare schools based on academic programs, size, location, cost, career preparation, internships, and social climate.

4. Take college entrance exams

Some colleges will require an entrance exam for admission.

You'll take the ACT in the spring of your junior year, and you may want to take the SAT as well. Retake the exam(s) in the summer and fall as some colleges will use your best score for scholarship and admission decisions. You also have the option of retaking a single subject of the ACT.

Visit actstudent.org and collegeboard.org for sample questions, test dates, registration, and fees.

What do we mean by college?

College can mean any type of education beyond high school, including:

COMMUNITY COLLEGES (2-year)

These schools offer certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. They also have programs for those planning to transfer to a four-year school.

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (4-year)

These institutions offer bachelor's degrees. Many also award master's and doctorate degrees.

CAREER SCHOOLS (trade schools)

These schools award diplomas and certificates for specific trades. A few offer associate and bachelor's degrees.

Find Nebraska-based ACT test-prep resources at EducationQuest.org.

If you attend a community college, you may be required to take the Accuplacer or Companion placement tests.

5. Apply for admission

Be aware of deadlines and apply to your top 3-4 colleges in the fall of your senior year. Most will require:

- An application and fee
- Official high school transcripts which will show:
 - Your grade point average and/or class rank
 - Completed high school coursework
- ACT/SAT test scores

If your school conducts an Apply2College event, you'll get help with your applications during the school day.

6. Create a student portal

Once you're accepted for admission, the college will instruct you to create an online student account/portal for communications about financial aid, admissions, or other college-related matters.

RECOMMENDED COURSES FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

These courses reflect the most rigorous college admission requirements in the state. By taking them, you'll be better prepared for admission to any college in Nebraska.

ENGLISH

4 years of intensive reading and writing

MATH

4 years including algebra, algebra II, and geometry – and one additional course that builds on knowledge of algebra II

SOCIAL SCIENCES

3 years including American and/or world history; one additional course in history, American government, and/or geography; and a third course from any social science discipline

NATURAL SCIENCES

3 years including biology, chemistry, physics, or earth sciences. One course must include laboratory instruction.

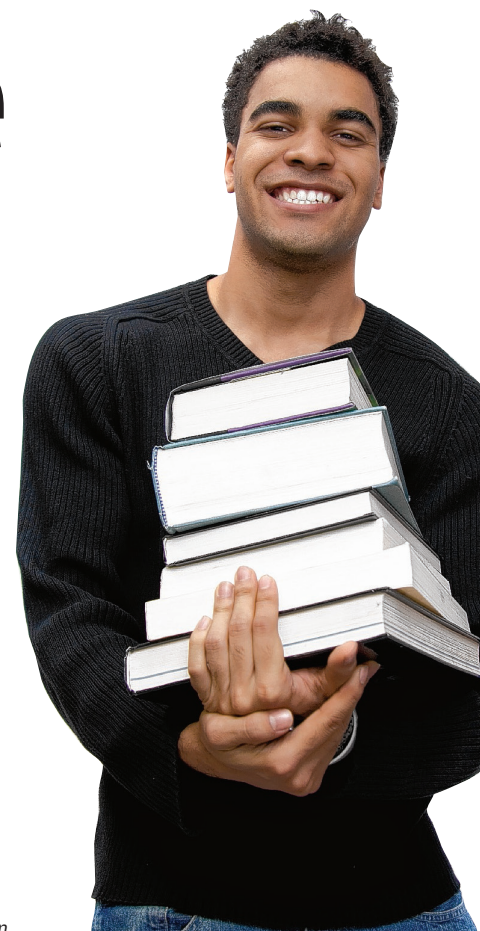
WORLD LANGUAGE

2 – 4 years of the same language

DUAL CREDIT & ADVANCED PLACEMENT

If you take Dual Credit courses in high school, you could earn college credit at a lower tuition cost. Advanced Placement courses are another option for earning college credit. Ask your counselor if these courses are available at your school, and if you qualify for a scholarship to cover dual-credit courses.

Source: EducationQuest Foundation



Your
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to College
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will help you get there.



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Submit Your Scholarship Application on Time

BY ALLISON OURADA

When you are a senior in high school, it seems like you will never have enough time to finish everything that you want to accomplish. The addition of scholarships to your schedule can seem overwhelming when each application has different requirements and deadlines, but with a little organization, you can optimize your scholarship search even with a busy schedule. Here are some scholarship tips to ensure that you meet the deadline.



mail a couple of days before the deadline date to ensure that it arrives on time. If there is a postmark date listed as the deadline, this means that your application must be in the mail by that day. Online/email submissions should be received instantly by the provider after you submit them, but it is still a good idea to not wait until the last minute to submit in case of technical difficulties.

What are the application requirements?

While reading through the application, be sure to note all of the required application components that you will need to submit. It is important to do this as soon as possible because some elements of your application will take longer to complete than others. Some common components of scholarship applications are essays, letters of recommendation, FAFSA documentation, school transcripts, and more.

In addition, you will need time to proofread your application before you submit it. Most of these tasks cannot be accomplished the day before the deadline. In fact, you

should start on components like the letter of recommendation a few weeks in advance to ensure that it is completed in time. For each application, mark all of the individual pieces that you must complete and estimate how long that each one will take. Be sure that you make realistic timelines based on your other obligations!

What organization method is best for you?

Once you know when your application is due and have an idea of how long each component will take to complete, mark important scholarship milestones on your calendar. Some people prefer paper planners or calendars, but the calendar and reminder functions on your phone are also great ways to stay organized. Find what method works for you and go for it!

Keeping track of several scholarship applications at once can be difficult, but with a little work, you will turn in your applications on time and be well on your way to earning that scholarship money.

Source: EducationQuest Foundation

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Zoe, Student



JUNIORS...

A GUIDE FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO COLLEGE



FALL

- ☐ Ask your counselor what courses you still need to take to meet college admission requirements.
- ☐ Take dual-credit courses to earn college credit – if available at your school.
- ☐ Get involved in extracurricular activities to increase your chances for scholarships and college admission.
- ☐ Attend a virtual Financial Aid Program to learn how to pay for college.
- ☐ Attend a virtual College Fair to meet with college representatives.
- ☐ Learn about careers that match your skills and interests.
- ☐ Research colleges that offer programs in your areas of interest.

VISIT [EducationQuest.org](https://www.educationquest.org) to:

- Sign up for *Countdown2College* monthly email tips.
- Create or update your *Activities Resume*.
- Find dates of virtual Financial Aid Programs and College Fairs.
- Set up a *ScholarshipQuest* profile to find Nebraska-based scholarships.
- Use *Reality Check* to match your future career with your desired lifestyle.
- Research colleges using *College Profiles*.

WINTER

- ☐ Prepare for the ACT. Ask your counselor about test-prep options including actstudent.org.
- ☐ Focus on your career interests by taking a career assessment at your school.

SPRING

- ☐ Attend a virtual College Fair.
- ☐ Go on college visits (on campus or virtually).
- ☐ Narrow your top college choices.
- ☐ Take the ACT test.
- ☐ Apply for a summer job, and create a budget to help you save for college.

SUMMER

- ☐ Retake the ACT and try to improve your score.
- ☐ Update your *Activities Resume*. Include awards, honors, volunteer work, and other activities.
- ☐ Job shadow to explore potential careers.
- ☐ Use *ScholarshipQuest* to research scholarships you can apply for your senior year.

SEE PAGE 14 FOR SENIOR LIST

5 Ways to Make Your Scholarship Application **STAND OUT**

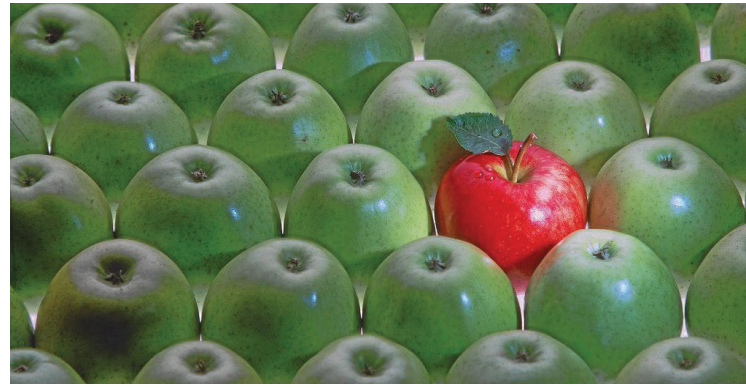
BY ALLISON OURADA

All scholarships have a limit on dollars available, so scholarship committees are looking for applications that stand head and shoulders above the rest. While this may sound intimidating, preparing a great scholarship application is not that difficult. And surprisingly, it won't eat up all your time, either. Here are some tips to submitting a standout scholarship application.

Only apply for scholarships you qualify for. If you send in an application for every scholarship opportunity you can find, you increase your chances, right? Wrong. Applications that don't meet the eligibility criteria end up in the 'disqualified' pile and usually don't get a second look. You've

worked hard on your application, so why bother sending it if it won't be considered? Need help finding more scholarships? Ask your school counselor to point you in the right direction.

Follow the directions (all of them). Yes, you've heard this from every teacher you've had since kindergarten, but it applies here too. With scholarships, this means filling out the ENTIRE application (leave no blanks unless the instructions specifically say to do so) and including ALL supporting documents. This is why you need to read, read, READ the application. Do you have to submit a Student Aid Report? Transcript? Letter of Recommendation? Essay? Then submit it. Incomplete applica-



tions end up in the same place as the disqualified applications. If you don't understand exactly what you need to submit, ask your school counselor or knowledgeable adult to help you. You can even call the scholarship provider if they include contact information on the application.

Be neat. If you're filling out a paper application instead of an online application, neatness often counts. Try not to crumple it or spill anything on it. Only fold it when you're putting it in the envelope. Better yet, get an envelope big enough so that you don't have to fold it. Typing your application

is a good idea, but writing neatly in blue or black ink is also acceptable. Remove any mistakes with white-out or by drawing a single line through it. No scribbles allowed!

Write a great essay. Believe it or not, you don't have to be a great writer to earn a scholarship. However, you will have to put in a little work if writing does not come naturally to you. Regardless of your writing skill, ALWAYS have someone read through your application before you submit it. The best way to revise your essay is by giving it to a teacher to proofread.

Be careful who you ask to recommend you. Asking someone to

write a letter of recommendation can be intimidating, but it is one of the most important elements of a good scholarship application. It is important to find someone who has authority, who is able to be neat and follow directions, and who knows your strengths well. When I was a senior, I had my guidance counselor, my speech coach, my Spanish teacher, my science teacher, and my pastor write recommendations for me. My speech coach even saved a copy of her recommendation so that she could edit it and submit it for multiple applications. Needless to say, I asked her for a recommendation several times.

At this point, some of you may be thinking to yourself, Okay, what's the catch? Where's the hard part? Truthfully, there is no consistent 'hard part' of filling out scholarship applications. The most important thing to remember with scholarships is to be intentional about filling them out. Once that money starts coming in, you can relax and make the most out of your last months of high school.

Source: EducationQuest Foundation

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If your employment was impacted by COVID-19, you could be eligible for the MCC Cares Scholarship – a one-time \$1,100 amount you can use to enroll in short-term training programs, or apply toward an associate degree in more than 60 eligible programs.

Find out if you qualify and apply at mccneb.edu/CaresScholarship by Oct. 31.

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How to Pay for College

Now that you know how to find the right college and how much college will cost, it's time to figure out how to pay for it. We'll walk you through the steps to apply for scholarships and financial aid.

1. Apply for scholarships

Follow these tips for scholarship success:

- Research potential awards by using free scholarship-search resources including your school counselor, the college you plan to attend, ScholarshipQuest at EducationQuest.org, and other free internet-based scholarship searches.

- Complete an Activities Resume at EducationQuest.org so you'll have a list of your activities, honors, and awards handy when completing applications.

- Create a list of scholarships you're eligible to apply for. Tackle the most difficult applications first. Pay attention to deadlines; if you miss one, your application will not be considered.

- Request letters of recommendation from adults who know you well. Give them plenty of notice, a deadline, information about the scholarship, and a copy of your Activities Resume.

2. Create an account

To begin the process of applying for financial aid, you and a parent must each create an account at studentaid.gov. This is the site you will use to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and apply for and track student loans.

3. Complete the FAFSA

The FAFSA is your application for federal, state, and college-based financial aid. Complete the form at studentaid.gov on or after October 1 of your senior year. You may also complete the FAFSA via the myStudentAid app.

- The colleges you list on the application will use your FAFSA information to award financial aid. Submit the form before the college(s) FAFSA priority date to get the best financial aid package.

- After you submit your FAFSA, expect a Student Aid Report (SAR) via an email link. It indicates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and if further action is required. Renew the FAFSA every year you're in college.

- Visit EducationQuest.org to find a FAFSA Checklist and other tools to help you complete the FAFSA.

4. Be prepared for verification

Watch your student portal and email closely as the college(s) might request verification of your FAFSA information. The college(s) will not process your financial aid package until you provide required documents.

5. Expect a financial aid award notification

The colleges you listed on your FAFSA will notify you of the types and amounts of financial aid they're offering. You will only receive notifications from colleges that accepted you for admission. Accept or decline the financial aid package by the deadline.

The colleges use this "financial need" formula to calculate how much to award you in financial aid:

COST OF EDUCATION (tuition, fees, books, living expenses)

– EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (your FAFSA results)

= YOUR FINANCIAL NEED

The colleges will award you as much of the "financial need" amount as possible. This could be a combination of scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans.

Types of financial aid

SCHOLARSHIPS

These are awarded by private donors or your college. Some are based on financial need while others are based on criteria such as academics, leadership, athletics, or talents.

GRANTS*

These are not repaid and are awarded to students who show financial need. They include:

- Pell Grant
- Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Nebraska State Opportunity Grant
- College-based grants

WORK-STUDY*

Also based on financial need, this is money you earn from a college-based job to help pay for school expenses.

STUDENT LOANS*

This is money you borrow and must repay after you're done with college. Loans are also available for parents.

*These types of financial aid are based on FAFSA results.

Source: EducationQuest Foundation





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Tackling the FAFSA Verification Process

BY JACQUIE BUTLER

You've filed your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal student Aid), but now the college is asking for additional information. You begin to question yourself, "How can that be? Did I do something wrong? What is this verification thing they're talking about?" Well, never fear...we've got the answers!

After you've filed your FAFSA, your information goes to the Federal Processing Center. Once there, it's reviewed to make sure all Social Security numbers, dates of birth, etc. are a match with the information the Social Security Administration has on record. Next, they "crunch" the numbers reported on the FAFSA and then pass that information to the college(s) that you listed on your application. This is where verification comes into play.

What is verification?

Verification is required by the federal government and is a mini-audit of the information you provided on your FAFSA. About one-in-three FAFSA filers are selected for verification. Actually, some colleges verify 100% of the students who submit their FAFSA....so as you can tell, it doesn't mean that you necessarily did something wrong on yours! Not all students that are selected for verification are chosen for the same reason. It could be any of (but not limited to) the following reasons:

- Inconsistent information
- Missing signatures
- Failure to use the IRS data retrieval tool
- Random selection

How will you know if you're selected for verification?

If you were chosen for verification, you'll be notified by the college via postal mail, e-mail, or your college-based student account. Carefully read any notifications from the college, and send any information they are requesting from you ASAP. Keep in mind: the college cannot process your financial aid if you ignore their requests, and missing the verification deadline could impact the amount of financial aid you receive!



What documents might be needed?

Some of the more common documents requested include:

- Household verification form (who you reported in the household on the FAFSA)
- Printout of child support paid or received
- Proof of SNAP or food stamp benefits
- Copies of IRS tax transcripts and/or W2s
- Confirmation of non-tax filing status
- Court/caseworker documentation for guardianship, wards of court
- Clarification or documentation of other conflicting or inconsistent information

How long does the verification process take?

After you have turned in all necessary paperwork, the verification process typically takes about two weeks. Once your file is complete, the college will post your financial aid award notification to your student portal or mail your award letter to you.

Who do I contact for questions?

The FAFSA verification process isn't something that should cause anxiety or stress. If you have further questions or are unsure about what you need to do, contact your college's financial aid office or the EducationQuest office nearest you!

Source: EducationQuest Foundation



Just because you're serious about where you want to go in life doesn't mean you can't **HAVE FUN** getting there.

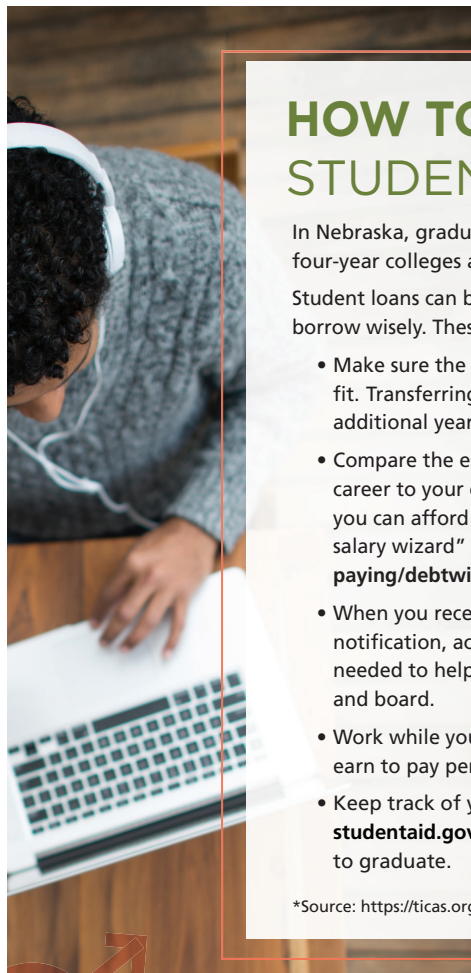
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HOW TO MANAGE STUDENT LOAN DEBT

In Nebraska, graduates from public and private nonprofit four-year colleges average \$26,422 in student loan debt.*

Student loans can be a good resource as long as you borrow wisely. These tips will help you do that:

- Make sure the college you plan to attend is a good fit. Transferring to a different school can add additional years of college and loan debt.
- Compare the estimated starting salary of your future career to your estimated college debt to ensure you can afford future loan payments. Find a “debt/salary wizard” calculator at mappingyourfuture.org/paying/debtwizard/.
- When you receive your financial aid award notification, accept only the amount in student loans needed to help pay for tuition, fees, books, and room and board.
- Work while you go to college and use the money you earn to pay personal expenses.
- Keep track of your federal student loan debt at studentaid.gov so you’re not surprised when it’s time to graduate.

*Source: <https://ticas.org/interactive-map/>

OTHER WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

NEST 529 COLLEGE SAVINGS PLAN

By investing in this plan, your parents can set aside money for your college education – and get a Nebraska state income tax deduction. Find details at nest529.com.

COLLEGE PAYMENT PLANS

Many schools offer a monthly payment plan. Ask your college about finance charges.

THE MILITARY

All military branches offer education assistance including the G.I. Bill, tuition reimbursement, and student loan repayment. Talk to a recruiter for details.

PRIVATE LOANS

These student loans are not funded by the federal government. Talk to the college financial aid office to determine if a private loan might be an option to help fund your education.

HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT LOAN

A line of credit allows you to borrow money as you need it, which fits well with tuition payments.

NEBRASKA AGENCIES

Certain Nebraska agencies provide education assistance for those who qualify. Examples include:

- Nebraska VR
- Nebraska Department of Labor
- ResCare Workforce Service
- Central Plains Center for Services

AMERICORPS

Provides a stipend and educational award in exchange for community service. To learn more, visit serve.nebraska.gov or americorps.gov.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TAX BENEFITS

AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY CREDIT

Students must be enrolled in college at least half-time for one period of the tax year and be pursuing an undergraduate degree.

LIFETIME LEARNING CREDIT

Students must be enrolled for at least one academic period beginning in the tax year. This credit is also allowed for courses toward a degree, educational credential, or for classes taken to improve job skills.

Pack Your Goals for College

BY RJ VEGA

If you're a soon-to-be college freshman, you are likely thinking about what to pack up & take with you to college.

In addition to your toothbrush and favorite teddy bear, one thing you shouldn't forget to take with you to college is your goals. Short-term and long-term goals will be important as the next year unfolds, to keep you on track and to keep you making progress. Whether you plan to attend a college in-person or virtually, close to home or far away, here are a few thoughts as you embark on your college journey.

Bring that hand sanitizer

COVID-19 has been such a game-changer. Just like a strong supply of sanitizer clears away the old germs and leaves your hands clean and fresh, you too are starting a clean and fresh new chapter of your life. Get ready to meet a bunch of other incoming freshmen

just like yourself. Whether they live on the same dormitory floor as you, are your new classmates, or join the same student clubs as you, remember that everyone is starting with a clean slate! In addition to friends, think about the new professors, teachers, and employers you will get to know.

SET A GOAL: Get to know at least one new person in each of your classes, and introduce yourself to your professor. This will help you as the semester unfolds and the coursework gets heavier, should you not understand an assignment or need to study for future tests.

Use a planner

Time management will be crucial during college. Instead of being stuck at your high school from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., your schedule now has much more flexibility. With more flexibility comes more opportunities to join student

clubs, play intramural sports, and of course, study! Generally, college coursework requires more study hours and reading than high school coursework. Keep yourself disciplined and on-time with the use of a planner, either a physical paper one or a digital app. The important thing is to create a weekly schedule that includes time for that which you find most important: academics, physical fitness, work, social time, etc.

SET A GOAL: Plan to join a student club that has to do with your major, and a different club of something that you find fun. Not only does this help you get connected with your fellow students, but this will also help you find some balance for your well-being.

Don't forget your water bottle

Hydration is important, as is physical activity. Not just to



combat those infamous freshmen 15, but physical activity helps the mental health side of your well-being. Whether you work out at the campus gym, or join an intramural sport, or simply go for an evening walk, keep yourself in a positive & productive physical state.

SET A GOAL: Allocate at least 30 minutes of each day to doing a physical activity. Things may get tough around mid-terms and finals week, so establishing this habit now will keep you on track when your classes start feeling heavy.

Source: EducationQuest Foundation



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FALL

- ☐ Take dual-credit courses to earn college credit – if available at your school.
- ☐ Visit your top college choices.
- ☐ Use *ScholarshipQuest* to look for scholarships.
- ☐ Attend a virtual College Fair to meet with college representatives.
- ☐ Attend a virtual Financial Aid Program to learn how to pay for college.
- ☐ Apply to your top colleges. If your school has an *Apply2College* event, you'll get help during the school day.
- ☐ Prepare for the FAFSA by creating an account at **studentaid.gov** (one for you and one for a parent).
- ☐ Complete the FAFSA at **studentaid.gov** – or via the **myStudentAid app** – on or after October 1 to apply for financial aid.
- ☐ Expect a Student Aid Report (SAR) indicating your FAFSA was processed.
- ☐ Retake the ACT and/or SAT.

VISIT **EducationQuest.org** to:

- Sign up for *Countdown2College* email tips.
- Update your *Activities Resume*.
- Research colleges using *College Profiles*.
- Find free FAFSA tools.
- Find dates of virtual Financial Aid Programs and College Fairs.
- Find Nebraska-based scholarships via *ScholarshipQuest*.
- Use *Reality Check* to match your future career with your desired lifestyle.

WINTER

- ☐ Watch for acceptance letters from the colleges you applied to.
- ☐ Be prepared for verification. The college(s) may request documents to verify your FAFSA information.
- ☐ Expect financial aid award notifications from the college(s) you listed on your FAFSA.

SPRING

- ☐ Compare financial aid award notifications to see which college offers the best award package.
- ☐ Continue to apply for scholarships. Many have spring deadlines.
- ☐ Make your final college decision and notify the other schools.
- ☐ Submit your housing deposit before the deadline.

SUMMER

- ☐ Attend new-student orientation at your college.
- ☐ Apply for student loans, if needed. Your college will tell you how to apply.
- ☐ Coordinate dorm purchases with your roommate.



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