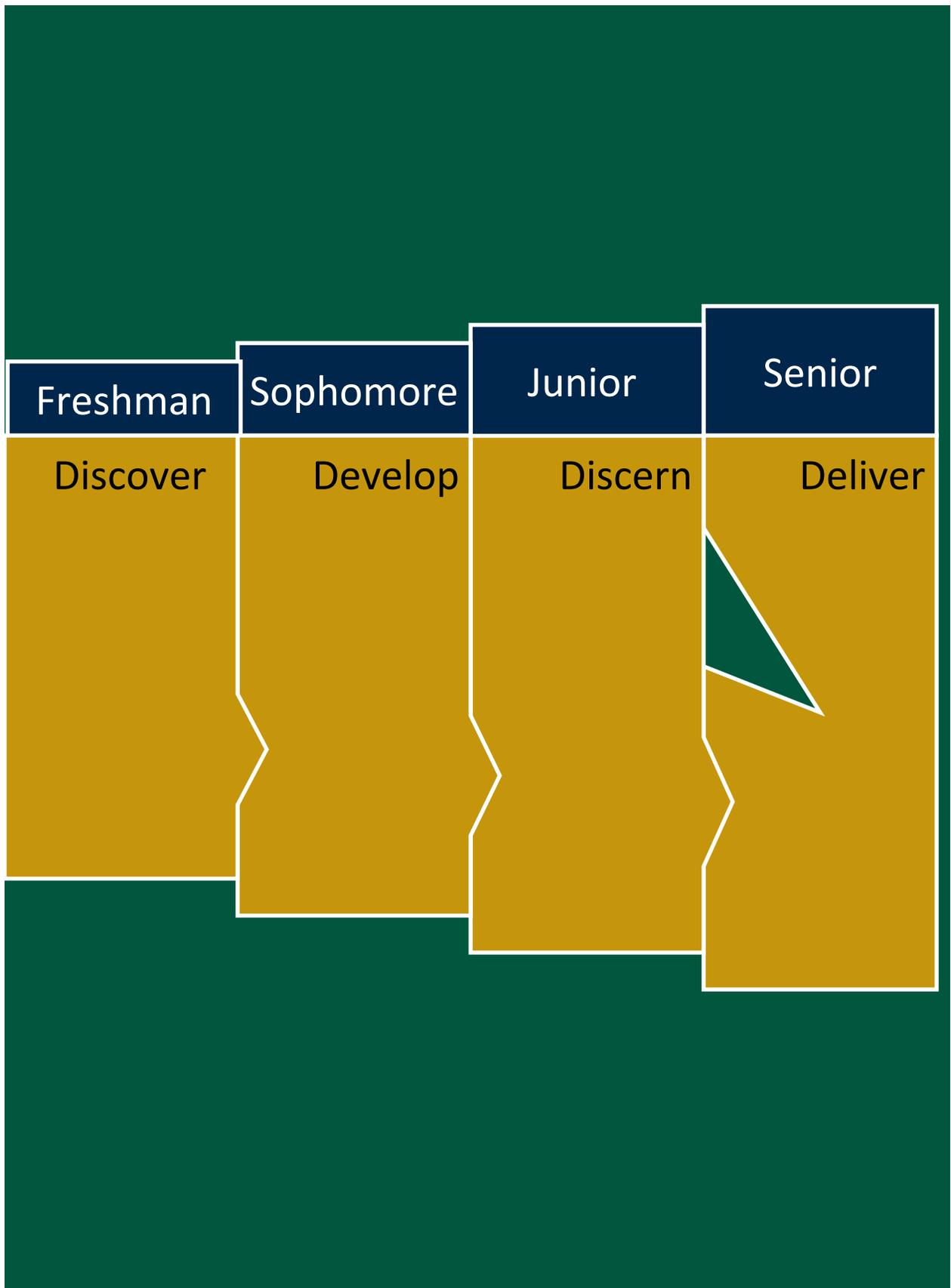


# College Counseling Guide



**Servire Culturae Vitae**





Dear Father McGivney Student and Family,

I am pleased to share with you the College Counseling Guide for your Father McGivney Catholic High School experience. Father McGivney Catholic High School has as its mission to form a strong academic community of disciples, responding to the call of Jesus Christ; prepare students to serve the Culture of Life through a total gift of self; engage students in the mission, sacramental life, and magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church; and develop faithful citizens to lead an America that values the dignity and worth of every human person. Therefore, the goal of the Student Services Department is to provide our students with the opportunities and information to help them reach their God given potential. Our objective is to help students discover, develop, discern and finally deliver their God given talents to the world upon their graduation from Father McGivney Catholic High School.

This document will help you understand the opportunities provided by Father McGivney, the expectations of the student and the plan for the parents to help our students accomplish this goal and objectives. Like any document, it is only a plan. The ultimate success of your experience will be determined by your effort and execution of the plan. If done right and well, we believe it will result in the student's admission and success at the college of their choice.

The high school education is unique in that to be completed successfully; we must help lead students from their relative dependence on the adults in their lives to a more independent level of existence. It is with this reality in mind that we have planned a curriculum and experience to challenge our students to their fullest and invite them to reach beyond their usual comforts. In other words, we will intentionally and appropriately push students so that they can learn the skills, habits and advocacy to navigate to this desired level of independence. It will require us all working together to help this happen.

It is fitting that our mascot is the Griffin, an ancient mythical creature who was known to guard priceless possessions. Just as the Griffin guarded treasure, the Student Services Department will guard your children as we guide them to discover, develop, discern and finally deliver them to the plan God has designed.

I look forward to our work together.

Bobbie J. Madura  
Director of Student Services

## Discover – Freshmen Year

The freshmen year is one filled with new discoveries. It is important that students keep an open mind and seek out opportunities to discover the many different options available for them in their college choices. Most importantly, it is a critical year to discover the importance of a solid high school experience as it relates to opportunities and options for college and beyond. This will be done largely through learning the difference between homework and studying.

### Objectives:

- Have students develop proper study habits and skills to reach their full potential
- Help students discover their interests, values and abilities and how they relate to career and college options
- Encourage students to be involved and engaged in school so they can develop as a person
- Educate students and parents about what colleges desire and require in admission decisions
- Prepare and inform students and parents about Standardized Testing
- Introduce the College Counseling process and help families be actively involved

### Expectations of Student:

- Study at least one hour every night five nights per week and get the best grades possible
- Create a college file to keep brochures, notes on college visits, copies of test scores, copies of transcripts, etc.
- Use available resources:
  - RenWeb to ensure assignments for each class each day
  - Email to be informed of ongoing events
  - Google Calendar to track assessments and appointments
  - Google Classroom for assignments and instruction
- Sign up for SCOIR, Big Futures, and the ACT Profile to assist in college and career planning then explore the sites and begin to build your college/career portfolio.
- Take the ASPIRE and the Pre-ACT to determine your strengths and weaknesses that need to be identified prior to the ACT.
- Develop your interests and be involved as it is impressive on any application.
- Meet individually with Student Services to discuss & update your four-year plan and follow through on goals.
- Listen to announcements and read mailings regarding important information and meetings.

### Plan for Parent(s):

- Monitor and ensure student's proper study habits & grades.
- Use Resources to monitor and assist student
  - Email to be informed of homework assignments
  - Google Calendar to track assessments and events
  - Google Classroom for projects, assignment submissions, and to save work
- Sign up for ACT Profile and have your child allow access to his/her portfolio or navigate through Big Futures and SCOIR with them so you can track their progress.
- Be aware of student's standardized test scores.
- Look for summer opportunities to enhance student's interests or abilities.
- Read mailings regarding important information and attend important meetings.

## Develop – Sophomore

The sophomore year is an important one for the students to really push themselves to develop their full God-given potential. Also, it is an important year to develop a comprehensive understanding of your post-secondary options. This is the year to really begin developing and broadening your understanding of college options and choices.

### **Objectives:**

- Develop more independent and efficient study habits
- Stress success in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum
- Provide Information about the different college characteristics and choices
- Teach how to effectively and meaningfully research college options
- Explain proper test taking strategies for college entrance tests
- Foster involvement in extracurricular area, especially one of passion

### **Expectations for Student:**

- Study at least one and a half hours every night five nights per week.
- Continue using RenWeb, Email, Google Calendar, and Google Classroom and for projects, assignment submissions, stay organized, and to save work.
- Take the PSAT in the fall and the ACT in the late Spring for a baseline score.
- Continue to visit/update your portfolio on SCOIR, Big Futures, and ACT Profile.
- Come listen to College Representative Visits to develop understanding of different college characteristics; 2 year versus 4 year, local or out of state, etc.
- Meet individually with Student Services to discuss & update your four-year plan and follow through on goals.
- Explore summer opportunities for academic growth.
- Update your college file with newer brochures, college visit notes, and test scores.
- Make informal college visits to determine what kind of college will be the best fit for you. Walk around a college campus, attend a sporting event, eat at the student union, all to get a feel for college life.
- Begin to think about a major. Think about your interests, talents, and abilities. Use ACT Profile, the Career Profile tool on SCOIR, and BigFutures to better explore your options.

### **Plan for Parent:**

- Monitor and ensure student's proper study habits & grades.
- Continue using email, Google calendar, and Google Classroom.
- Be aware of student's standardized test scores.
- Monitor your student's portfolio contents on ACT Profile or navigate Big Futures and SCOIR with them.
- Assist student in finding appropriate summer activity to best learn and prepare for college.
- Read mailings regarding important information and attend important meetings.
- Encourage informal college visits and begin the conversation on what makes an institution a good fit.
- Discuss their strengths and the major fields of interest which might become their future career.
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## Discern - Junior

During the junior year it is important for the student to be deeply involved in the discernment process for what they will do with their future. Students should be discerning which colleges will be a “good fit” for them by actively seeking out information on schools and developing a list of schools for which they plan to apply. They also should know their academic standing and how that relates to their college admission chances.

### Objectives:

- Encourage commitment to rigorous & appropriate college preparatory curriculum
- Provide resources, information and recommendations on college choices
- Have student complete list of at least 5 “good fit” schools
- Give individual explanation and recommendation for college entrance exams
- Explain importance and value of campus visits and provide information about scheduling and planning meaningful visit

### Expectations for Student:

- Study at least two hours every night five nights per week.
- Continue using Email to be informed of homework assignments Google Calendar to track assessments and Google Classroom for projects, assignment submissions, and to save work.
- Attend College Fairs.
- Take second ACT and SAT (if needed) by end of junior year.
- Continue to visit/update your portfolio on SCOIR, ACT Profile, and Big Futures.
- Listen to College Representative Visits and visit college campuses to help discern a proper college fit for you.
- Plan College visits by visiting each institutions website, clicking on their visit link, and confirming that visit. Request college visit paperwork from the Student Services Office to have your visit not count against your attendance.
- When scheduling college visits, request to speak with an admissions counselor as well as a financial aid counselor to answer any questions you may have. In addition, make sure to visit during a normal school day to see what the campus truly is like. Take pictures and make notes to help you organize your information during this discernment process. Some specific questions to ask are:
  - What makes this college unique?
  - What are your most popular majors?
  - What is the job placement percentage of your graduates?
  - What percentage of first-year students return for their sophomore year?
  - Do most students stay on campus or leave on the weekends?
  - Which admission criteria do you consider most important (GPA, ACT/SAT scores, Community Service)?
- Write each institution a Thank You Note for their time with you during your visit.
- Meet individually with Student Services to discuss & update four-year plan and follow through on goals.
- Update your college file with new brochures, college visit notes, transcripts, and potential essays.
- Look for summer opportunities to increase chances for acceptance to schools.

- Know which assessments you need to take/re-take your senior year.
- Update your resume to highlight your wanted points.
- Begin to formulate your college essay for summer applications. If you are going to need letters of recommendation, make your request before school is out for the summer.
- Fully participate in the Junior Job Shadow Day to experience a day in the life of the career you may want to major in. Think about your abilities, talents, interests as well as taking interest inventories on ACT profile or on SCOIR to help in the discernment process.

**Plan for Parent:**

- Monitor student's study habits and grades and encourage continued effort.
- Continue using email, Google calendar, and Google Classroom.
- Be aware of student's ACT scores and see that they take second ACT by end of junior year (consider test prep course).
- Monitor your student's portfolio contents on SCOIR, Big Futures, and on ACT Profile.
- Attend college and financial aid night programs to become more familiar with information presented.
- Assist student in finding appropriate summer activity to best increase chances for acceptance to preferred schools.
- Start a conversation on college costs. Let your child know how much you can contribute and begin to investigate financial aid opportunities.

## **Deliver - Senior**

The senior year is where the student gets to deliver all that they have discovered, developed and discerned over the past three years. It is important to have a good sense of what your options are and where you can best achieve your goals. The time, effort and quality of your delivery will have a significant impact on your successes. Enjoy and trust in God to guide you to your next step in your journey.

### **Objectives:**

- Help students complete commitment to rigorous & appropriate college preparatory curriculum
- Assist student in completing and delivering their best application possible
- Guide and support student in final requirements and decisions
- Assist students and parents in finding and getting best scholarships and financial aid package possible
- Leave student with all the skills, knowledge and faith to go and serve the Lord

### **Expectations for Student:**

- Study at least two hours every night five nights per week.
- Continue using Email to be informed of homework assignments Google Calendar to track assessments and Google Classroom for projects, assignment submissions, and to save work.
- Attend college and financial aid night programs to help complete the process.
- Complete on time at least 3-5 applications to “good fit” schools (1-2 fall back, 2 realistic, and 1-2 stretch schools).
- Take additional SAT or ACT if needed.
- Finalize your portfolio on SCOIR, ACT Profile, and Big Futures while also planning your financial aid.
- Visit any remaining schools to help make college choice.
- Fully investigate and complete forms for all opportunities for scholarship and financial aid.
- Decide where to apply with confidence in God’s plan for you.
- Finalize your college essay.
- Complete all college applications. Schools use different sites. Explore the Common App, SendEdu, Coalition, and some even use their own application on their school website.
- Ask teachers and administrators for letters of recommendation. Include due dates and what is needed within the recommendation in your request.
- Discuss college costs with your parents to determine what you can actually afford. Don’t make any final judgements until you receive the financial packages from each of the institutions for which you are interested.

### **Plan for Parent:**

- Monitor student’s study habits and grades and encourage continued effort
- Continue using Email to be informed of homework assignments Google Calendar to track assessments and Google Docs for projects, assignment submissions, and to save work
- Be aware of SAT and ACT test scores and determine if higher score can or needs to be achieved (consider test prep class if necessary)
- Attend college and financial aid night programs to help complete the process

- Monitor your student's portfolio contents on SCOIR, ACT Profile, and navigate Big Futures with your child to include examining the financial aid help listed on the website
- Assist student in finding all opportunities for scholarships and financial aid including filing of the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Help make College Choice with confidence in God's plan for your child to include discussion of your budget and what you can afford to pay in regards to college.

## FAQ

Q: How hard is it to get into college?

A: Some colleges accept all high school graduates until their spaces are filled. Other schools are more selective and harder to get into. If you apply to colleges that fit your ‘heat map’ in SCOIR, you are very likely to be accepted.

Q: What if I haven’t taken all of the recommended college prep courses?

A: You may need to take some additional courses in college to include those titled ‘academic development’ to strengthen your skills.

Q: What if I don’t know what I want to major in?

A: Many students go to college undeclared where they take general education courses that will fit into any major.

Q: Can I change my major?

A: Many students change their majors during the course of their college years.

Q: College is expensive, what if I don’t have enough money to go?

A: Financial aid opportunities are available for most families who need help paying for college. Talk to your parents, attend financial aid nights at the school, and ask your counselor for additional resources. The Federal Application For Student Financial Aid is available each year on October 1.

Q: Should I take the PSAT/NMSQT or the Pre-ACT?

A: The PSAT/NMSQT is good practice for the SAT and the Pre-ACT is good practice for the ACT. Completion of these assessments will help you see how your skills match up with others who are college bound. Your score reports will help you see where you need to focus preparation so that you can either sign up for Khan Academy SAT practice or attend ACT preparation classes.

Q: Where are the SAT and ACT given?

A: Test centers are designated throughout the area. The College Board website has information regarding the SAT and [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) is your go to for ACT information. In addition, the ACT is given to juniors on our campus every spring. To sign up for national test administration, go to [sat.collegeboard.org](http://sat.collegeboard.org) or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

Q: When filling out my applications, it asks if I would like Early Decision or Early Action, what do these mean?

A: Early Decision and Early Action will provide a student with early notification of their admission status. Early Decision plans are binding and thus if you apply Early Decision and are accepted, you MUST pull back all other applications and attend that specific university. Early Decision should only be considered by student who are absolutely sure of where they want to go to college. Early Action is not binding, so a student is still able to make a choice of institution after this decision, but the student still receives an admission decision early in the process.

Q: What are some common admission terms and what do they mean?

A: There are quite a few terms that can be confusing upon reading your acceptance packet.

Accepted: This means you have the opportunity to attend this institution, but you will still have to finalize your decision based on the requirements they provide.

Deferred: The college is not making a final decision on your admittance at this point. Deferred students usually can provide more information on their academic progress. You still have a chance for acceptance.

Denied/Not Accepted: The college has made a decision that you do not fit into the demographic they were wanting for this year. You will not be accepted or admitted.

Waitlisted: The college may reconsider you if enough accepted students do not enroll. The institution may ask for additional information from you to solidify your acceptance package.