

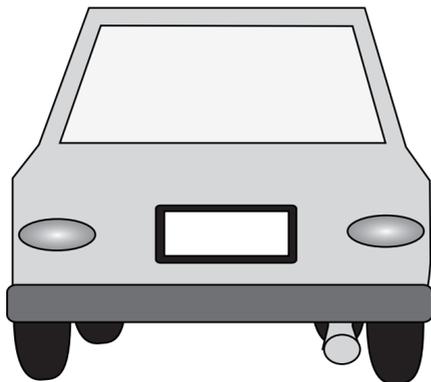
Features



A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE: A ROAD MAP FOR SENIORS

Many underclassmen view senior year as nine months of care-free, slacking-off fun. This fantasy is shattered the minute students begin to consider the stress and choices that follow. Most students will continue their education at universities and community colleges, while others will choose a different path, such as enlisting in the armed forces. Regardless of each individual senior's future plans, there are many options and steps that need to be considered.

By Features Editor Lindsay Croon



LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: THE NAVY

Some students go off to college to earn a degree right after graduation. Some go straight into the work force to start earning money; however, senior Jeff Chen is doing things a little differently— he's going off to the Navy. Yearning for independence and hoping to give his younger siblings a better chance so his parents will be able to pay for their college education, Chen decided to join the Navy. Entered as an enlist, he strives to become an officer or even an admiral one day.

"My goal is to have a full-time career in the Navy. Not many minorities [are in] the Navy, I want to be a part of the start of that," said Chen.

He does not necessarily want to go in as a Navy Seal; rather, he wants to work in the medical field as it specifically grabs his interest.

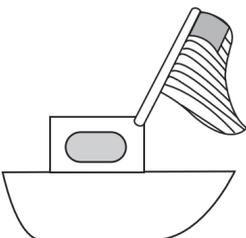
"The military is the military. I joined the Navy because the Marines are [involved in] combat. There's always going to be a risk. My parents are more comfortable with the sense of feeling of safety for me," said Chen.

To be in any officer position one needs a Bachelor's Degree. Chen hopes to join the Naval Academy next year. However, after graduation he's going to be stationed in Chicago for boot camp. "I plan to go to college to learn the field, because the main thing about the Navy is that it's hands on. I'm not good at watching movies in class and taking notes on a lecture," said Chen.

Chen is excited to see where this field will take him, hoping to find success and additional happiness in his endeavors. He's one of few AHS seniors who are leading the way into the military, exuding the eagerness and bravery necessary to start his career.

"We can do anything we set our minds to, just go for it," said Chen.

By Features Editor Karolina Zydziak



CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

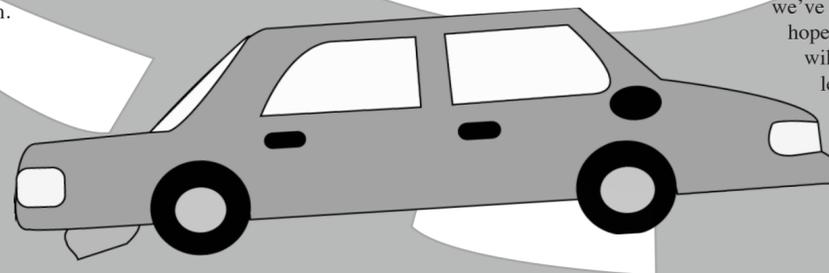
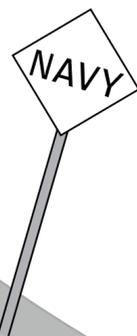
For the lucky seniors who will receive multiple acceptance letters this spring, another tedious task is at hand—choosing a college. While there are many factors to consider, the following are typically deciding aspects.

Location: While some students view college as an opportunity to explore previously undiscovered cities and perhaps even countries, others cannot bear the thought of being even ten miles away from home. Be realistic—out of state colleges are more expensive. If you do not have the resources to finance a college that is not in your home state, colleges within your state will most likely be more affordable.

Majors: If you have not done so already, perform thorough research to ensure that your top choice college has a reputable and quality program designed for your specific your top choice has options that you are possibly interested in.

Tuition: Even with the many resources available to students, such as financial aid, loans and grants, paying for college is almost always a main concern. If you do not want to be in debt after graduation, choosing a school that is more affordable will alleviate some concern regarding fees.

By Features Editor Lindsay Croon



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FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

For many prospective college students, paying full price for a higher education is out of the question. In fact, because of financially unstable times, the average student graduates from college with \$20,000 worth of debt to their name. Due to raised tuition costs, room and board as well as other miscellaneous expenses that add up during a college career, it is even more important to take advantage of the various forms of financial aid available.

Almost every high school student should know about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You should plan to submit this form as soon as possible since money is awarded on first come, first serve basis. This form is for both graduate and undergraduate students in the U.S. to apply for federal grants, which include Pell Grants, Cal Grants, work-study programs and loans.

•**Pell Grants:** These types of grants are for undergraduate students and can range in value from \$1,000 to \$5,550. They are awarded based on financial need, which also takes Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and expected college costs into consideration.

•**Cal Grants:** Cal Grants are a part of a financial aid program provided by the California Student Aid Program. To qualify for such a grant, you must complete the FAFSA, meet a minimum GPA requirement, be a California resident and plan to attend a college or university in California. There are five different types of Cal Grants, which all have separate requirements.

•**Work-study programs:** These kinds of programs help students earn money to pay for college by providing on-

campus employment. These can be federal or non-federal; the main difference being that non-federal work-study is not determined by financial need. It is also important to note that similar to filing the FAFSA, this must be renewed each year in order to continue in the program.

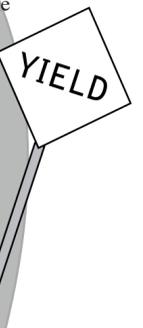
•**Loans:** While grants are free money that you don't have to pay back, loans are borrowed and must be paid back over time, sometimes with interest.

Another major financial aid application is the CSS Profile, provided through College Board. The main difference between this form and the FAFSA is that there is a limited list of schools, usually private, that require this application. In addition, the CSS Profile costs \$25 to complete and send to one school, plus \$16 to send it to each additional school you select. However, fee waivers are available depending on family income to help alleviate the cost. Many private schools require this form, but to be sure, you should research the required documents specific to any school you are applying to. It would be wise to submit the CSS Profile prior to your school's financial aid deadline.

According to College Board, "Many of the member colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools and scholarship programs use the information collected on [the CSS Profile] to help them award non federal student aid funds."

By Copy Editor Victoria Gavia

Sources:
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THE WAITING GAME

Now that the daunting task of applying to colleges is over for many seniors, the anxious game of waiting is the only thing that is separating us from receiving news of our admission status to their dream schools. After four long years of preparing—taking ACTs, studying for SATs, slaving over AP test prep, collecting extracurricular activities and perfecting personal statements—it is a feeling of both relief and apprehension that there is no longer anything that can be done to improve our chances of being admitted to the schools

we've been dreaming about since elementary school. We remain hopeful that the past four years of our lives—or lack thereof) will not have been spent in vain, when that glorious acceptance letter is in our hands, or on our computer screens. The tedious waiting game is made tolerable through the faith that come September, we will all be exactly where we are meant to be.

By Features Editor Lindsay Croon

