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SESSION 6: BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

The purpose of this session is to help students build momentum for their college planning that will carry them through to the actual point of selecting and making application to colleges. Students will be encouraged to think about the resources upon which they may draw over their high school years, including the adults in their lives.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students:

- Identified individuals who can serve as mentors in college planning
- Explored summer experiences that will enrich college readiness
- Enhanced problem-solving skills to be used as they pursue college admission
- Been reinforced with congratulations and a certificate of completion
- Completed an evaluation form

Activities and Handouts:

(Activities #1 and #2 require chalkboard and chalk or flipchart and markers)

Recap Activity: If students would like to share what qualities they would look for in the “Ideal Student” allow five or fewer minutes for them to read and discuss.

Activity #1: Finding Friends and Mentors on Your Path to College

Handouts: With a Little Help From My Friends (first two questions); How to Use Your School Counselor

Activity #2: Using Your Time Beyond the Classroom to Prepare for College

Handouts: With a Little Help From My Friends (third question); Summer Programs—You mean what I do in the summer can help me with college options?

Activity #3: Developing College-Readiness Problem-Solving Skills

Handout: My Map to College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now!

Activity #4: Wrapping it All Up

Handouts: Certificate of Completion; Evaluation tool

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ACTIVITY # 1: FINDING FRIENDS AND MENTORS ON THE PATH TO COLLEGE

Opening Discussion:

Each one of us requires friends and mentors as we work toward our future goals. It is important that students identify the individuals who can help them reach their goal of college attendance. Students should consider who may help or impede their planning for college.

Activity/Handout:

With a Little Help From My Friends How to Use Your School Counselor

Instructions:

1. Distribute the handout, "With a Little Help from My Friends." Allow approximately five minutes for students to answer the questions.
2. Ask students to share with the group the individual they have identified as a mentor and what role that person has played in each student's life.
3. Discussion: Have students report on the individuals whom they have identified as potential friends and mentors during their college planning process. Use the chalkboard or flip chart to list individuals by the roles played in the students' lives. By the end of this activity, students should have touched upon these individuals: parents, siblings, school counselors, teachers, coaches and leaders of extracurricular activities, community and religious leaders, employers.
4. Distribute the handout, "How to Use Your School Counselor." Give students a few minutes to review the handout.
5. Ask students to share what their experience with school counselors has been to date.
6. Discuss with students the special resource that school counselors may provide. Suggest ways to overcome problems that may have arisen in effective working relationships to date.



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

A mentor is defined as: “a wise and trusted teacher or guide.” Your road to college will be much easier if you enlist the help of more than one mentor along the way.

1. Name a person who has had a positive influence on your ability to go to college:
(Note: this person is one of your “mentors”)

- What is this individual’s relationship to you?
- How has he or she helped you move ahead toward college?

2. Who else can you think of who could be a “mentor” and help you attain your college goals?

3. Identify an experience you have had outside of the classroom (during the last year) that makes it more likely that you will have a successful college experience.

- How did this help you prepare for college?

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

School counselors are one of the best ongoing sources of support for students who plan to go to college. They can be your friend throughout the entire college process. If you are lucky enough to have access to a counselor in your school, it is in your best interest to visit that person on a regular basis.

Start by making an individual appointment to introduce yourself to your counselor. Begin your meeting by introducing yourself and stating clearly that it is your definite goal to attend college. Make sure your counselor realizes that this is **IMPORTANT** to you and that you are **HIGHLY MOTIVATED!** Whatever grade you are in **NOW**, this is the time to start helping your counselor get to know you and your college dreams.

Throughout your high school years, your counselor can help you:

- Plan classes that prepare you well for college admission and success. Your counselor knows which high school classes are required for college admission.
- Review your academic record and suggest areas that need improvement.
- Begin the admission process by identifying the questions you should be asking—and finding honest answers.
- Find information; for example in books, catalogues, brochures, and websites that deal either with the admission process or a specific college or university.
- Locate websites that offer **RELIABLE** and **FREE** information about college.
- Identify special opportunities that may maximize your chances for being a well-prepared and appealing candidate for colleges. These might include weekend or summer programs on college campuses (often free for first-generation students), internships or community college classes open to high school students.
- Learn about local college fairs, opportunities to visit college campuses, and even overnight visits to colleges that may be offered.
- Familiarize yourself with everything you need to know about the required college admission tests. Provide a fee waiver if you cannot pay for tests yourself.
- Figure out how to **PAY** for college. Your counselor can give you essential information about the “need-based” financial aid application process.

If you feel it will be helpful, ask your counselor to meet with you and the members of your family who will be working with you in your college planning. Having everyone in agreement about your future will make the process much easier!

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ACTIVITY #2: USING YOUR TIME BEYOND THE CLASSROOM TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE OPENING DISCUSSION:

Students should understand that experiences beyond the classroom can help them prepare for college admission and success. Colleges care about how students elect to use their unscheduled time. In particular, summer is an important time that can be used to enhance maturity, motivation and academic readiness.

Activity/Handout:

With a Little Help From My Friends (third question)

Summer Programs—You mean what I do in the summer can help me with college options?

Instructions:

1. Following up on question #3 from the handout students completed in Activity #2, ask each to share the experience that has enhanced their likelihood of a successful college experience and how this has helped them to prepare for college. Use the chalkboard or flip chart to list these activities.
2. Ask students to group these activities by kind, for example:
 - extracurricular activity
 - sports
 - church
 - employment
 - academic enrichment
3. Distribute the handout on Summer Programs. Explain that, in addition to what has already been listed, a summer program may be an exceptionally good experience in terms of college preparation. Point students particularly to the websites they may use to explore summer programs. (If computers are available, some time may be devoted to exploring the sites listed.)



SUMMER PROGRAMS:

You mean what I do in the summer can help me with college options?

What comes to mind when you think of summer? Summer job? Fun in the sun? Travel? How about college preparation? And did you know that colleges will take note of HOW you have used your summers as an indication of your educational preparation?

Working at a summer job can certainly help you save money for college and provide adult mentors, but think about investing some time at a summer program on a college campus. Many are free or low-cost, with scholarship options. The right choice can help you learn what it's like to be in college, where your career interests can lead you, and how to connect with more people who can help you in the college process.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT SUMMER PROGRAM FOR YOU:

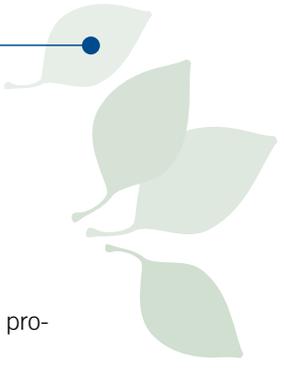
Find a program that fits your academic area of interest or just narrow down the list of things that seem of interest.

- Many colleges and universities host summer programs for high school students. Finding a program on a college campus will expose you to the college experience and help orient you for college life.
- Ask your local college or university about the programs they offer. Or, if you know what college you might want to attend after high school, look there.
- Many programs are associated with some type of cost, so be mindful of that. If cost is a concern, ask the program if they have financial aid or fee waivers. And also be aware that there are free summer programs out there.
- Registration deadlines are extremely important. Some programs accept every student who applies, and some are very selective. The best way to ensure your selection is to apply early. Make sure all necessary documentation is in your application so that it can be processed and so that you can be considered for the program of your choice.

While these programs are important for your development and your future, remember that this is still your summer vacation. In other words, communicate with your family as to the best times for you to participate in these programs.

In the end, you should pick the summer enrichment program that is the best fit for you academically and socially. Choose something in which you have a serious interest, and ask as many questions as you can about the program you choose so that you know exactly what to expect.

Visit **www.petersons.com** to find a great variety of summer programs, from camps to internships.



Below is a list of sample summer opportunities from college/career exploration to specific academic preparation, to finding out what it's like to be a college student while still in high school:

www.leadprogram.org—a partnership of top business schools and corporations that provides summer programs for high school juniors

www.blackexcel.org/summer-progs.htm—a comprehensive list of options for minority students

http://jackierobinson.org—provides educational and leadership development programs, as well as scholarships, mentors, and internships

www.abetterchance.org—a resource for identifying, recruiting and developing leaders among young people in underserved populations

www.jbhe.com—*The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* evaluates many programs and campuses seeking diversity

www.carleton.edu/summer/CLAE—a week long, all expense paid program for juniors to introduce them to college life and the value of a liberal arts education

http://courses.ncssm.edu/bennett/RECAP—a three-week research experience for students interested in chemistry, astronomy, or physics

www.spelman.edu/academics/summerprograms—a five-week non-residential program for students interested in the sciences



ACTIVITY #3: DEVELOPING COLLEGE- READINESS PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

OPENING DISCUSSION:

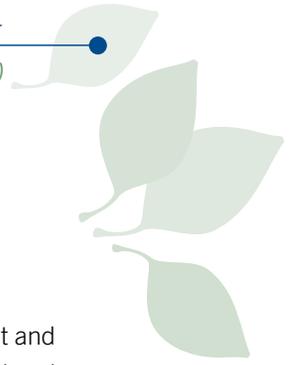
Students need to begin thinking ahead to how they will continue planning for college beyond the end of this session. The purpose of this activity is to help students consider challenges that may arise as they continue on their path to college. The exercise calls upon topics covered throughout the six session series. By problem solving and sharing with one another, students should grow in their determination to reach their goal—COLLEGE!

Activity/Handout

My Map to College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now!

Instructions:

1. Distribute the handout: My Map to College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now!
2. Divide students into small groups of, perhaps, three. Instruct them to follow the directions on the first page of the handout.
3. Bring the whole group back together. Move from small group to small group asking for their response to each challenge-point: Was it a “bump in the road” or a “roadblock?” How did they think the challenge might be addressed? Who might help?
4. Let other groups respond before moving on to the next challenge.
5. Invite the whole group to summarize what they have heard/learned from this exercise.



MY MAP TO COLLEGE: NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW⁵

Congratulations, you've made the decision to go to college. Good for you! Now you are in the driver's seat and here is a map to get you started on your way. You are going to find that there are some bumps in the road and even a few roadblocks. To reach your final destination—COLLEGE—you will need to figure out how to get over the bumps and around the roadblocks.

Work with your small group to come up with solutions to the challenges you will encounter on the map on the next page. First decide if this is a “bump in the road” (fairly easy to get over), or a “roadblock” (will require time and work). Next discuss possible solutions. Jot down who you might go to for help in making progress and/or how you solved the problem. Be ready to share with the whole group at the end.

My Map To College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now

MY MAP TO COLLEGE: NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!

YOU!

COLLEGE!

Road Bump 1: You have fallen far behind in one of the classes that you know is required for college admission. Your friend tells you should "team up" to an easier class second semester. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 2: Your mom is a single, working-mom. She has been depending on you to help with your little brothers and sisters. You aren't sure she can manage if you go away to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 3: You just got your score back from your college admission test (ACT or SAT). They are a disappointment and don't look good enough for admission to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 4: None of your friends are planning to go to college. They say that college is too long and hard. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 5: Your college application requires an essay. Writing is not your strength. You don't know how to get started. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 6: A military recruiter has visited your high school. He suggests that you join the armed forces instead of going to college. He tells you that you can get all the educational training that you will need, while seeing the world. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 7: You have never been on a college campus so you're not sure you'll recognize college when you get there. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 8: You read *Antony and Cleopatra* that the average cost of college education in the United States is that more money than you and your parents could ever save. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 9: It is time to register for your classes next year. Your counselor looks at your grades to date and suggest that you take less challenging classes than you know you will need for admission to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 10: You need to make a decision to see your school counselor to discuss college applications. She doesn't seem to believe in you. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 11: Your parents aren't sure that college is going to be a bump in the road or a road block. Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 12: You need to make a decision to see your school counselor to discuss college applications. She doesn't seem to believe in you. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 13: You need to make a decision to see your school counselor to discuss college applications. She doesn't seem to believe in you. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 14: You need to make a decision to see your school counselor to discuss college applications. She doesn't seem to believe in you. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

Road Bump 15: You need to make a decision to see your school counselor to discuss college applications. She doesn't seem to believe in you. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?

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ACTIVITY # 4: WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Opening Discussion:

This is an opportunity for you to congratulate all students on their commitment to attend college and their participation in the sessions. You will want to motivate students to continue beyond these sessions.

Activity/Handout:

Evaluation tool

Certificate of Completion

Instructions:

1. In your own way, thank and congratulate students on their participation and completion of the series of sessions.
2. Ask students for informal oral feedback on their experience.
3. Distribute Evaluation Tool and collect when completed.
4. Distribute Certificates of Completion.

