



Scholar Talk

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Important Dates:

3/1/09
FAFSA Deadline

4/17/09
CollegeBound's *Race for the Future* 5K Run
Druid Hill Park, Baltimore

6/15/09
Deadline for returning scholars to submit Spring 2009 grades, Financial Aid Award Letter, Student Aid Report and 10 community service hours



Unraveling the Mystery of GPA Calculations

Wondering what GPA you need this semester to maintain that 3.0 cumulative GPA? Curious if you could graduate cum laude or even magna cum laude? Eager to apply for an internship that has a GPA requirement? Confused by the algorithms required to simply calculate last semesters GPA?

If you identify with any of these situations, you should visit www.back2college.com/

raisegpa.htm and it will solve all of your GPA questions. All you have to do is type in your current



cumulative GPA, total number of credits completed during college to date, and then you list your current classes and your *anticipated* grades. You can then calculate your predicted new

cumulative GPA as well as what it will take to raise your GPA to a specific goal. You can even figure out how many credits you will need to reach that objective.

This website also has a simple GPA calculator if you want to figure out your GPA for last semester or last year. Just guide your browser to www.back2college.com/gpa.htm and follow the simple steps.

Article by Becky Bertell

Local \$Money\$ for College Students

If you are a CollegeBound scholar and you need money for college, read on! The Baltimore Community Foundation and the Central Scholarship Bureau are two local organizations that may be able to help you out.

The Baltimore Community Foundation has a common application with awards ranging from \$500—\$10,000. Visit their website at www.bcf.org to download and print a copy of their application. The deadline to apply is April 1st.

The Central Scholarship Bureau also has a common application with many scholarships and grants. In particular, check out the Straus Scholar Grant, which is designed specifically for sophomore, junior and senior college students.

The Central Scholarship Bureau also offers interest-free loans to families who qualify. Students can borrow up to \$10,000 per year based on need. Visit their website at www.centrlsb.org for more information and to

apply. The deadline to apply is May 1st.

If you attend a Maryland college or university you may be eligible for scholarships from your delegates and state senators. Visit www.mdelect.net to find your elected officials and information on how to reach them. Contact each person for directions on how to apply. Awards can range anywhere from \$200—\$9,000.

Article by Jamie Martino



Scholar Spotlight

The following students earned a **4.0 GPA** for the **Fall 2009** semester:

Shrelle Avery
Glenda Cornish
Sade Diggs
Casie Fowler
Melissa Oguamanam
Samantha Porter
Jasmine Vaughn
Malaika Williams
Edith Venable

The following students earned a **3.5 GPA** or higher for the **Fall 2009** semester:

Brittany Atkinson
Joshua Austin
Christine Brown
Joshua Brown
Jazmine Dorsey
Shekinatu Fasancy
Lena Harris
Amanda Heckman
Shawmell Horrey
James Houston, IV
Azzan Jordan
Davion Kirk
LaWanda Lewis
Mischa Minor
Daniel Muchai
Kellan Newby-Phipps
Jasmine Owens
Aaron Parker
Jasmine Pitts
Robert Plummer
Jasmen Rice
Theresa Tibbels
Ashley Waith

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Do's & Don'ts of Credit Cards

According to the Young Americans Center for Financial Education, fewer than 30% of young Americans are given the opportunity to take just one week's worth of coursework in money management or personal finance in high school. Another recent study by the YA Center showed that the number of 18 to 24 year olds declaring bankruptcy has increased 96% over the past 10 years. Since the average college student receives between 25 and 50 credit card solicitations *each semester* and the drop out rate for college students due to debt (8.5%) is higher than academic failure (6%), it is important to learn the ins and outs of credit cards.

Do's

- Read the fine print and be aware of fees! Are there penalties for making a late payment? Is there a fixed interest rate? Do your research!
- Choose a card with the lowest interest rate possible—the higher the interest rate, the more you have to pay each month that you carry a balance.
- Learn *now* about building credit, which basically equates to your financial reputation. Your credit is based on loans, number of credit cards, money borrowed, and late or skipped payments. Your credit history sticks with you for the long haul, so making mistakes now can affect you later with lenders, employers, and insurance agencies.
- Build *good* credit! Having no credit can be just as detrimental as having bad credit.
- Plan to pay off your larger purchases over the course of 2 or 3 months. That way you can start each semester without a balance and avoid most interest charges and fees.
- Visit www.collegestudentcreditcards.com to learn about your options as far as student credit cards. Compare interest rates, fees, and rewards programs. Visit each website and talk to a customer service representative to clarify any questions or confusion.
- Consider using a debit card. Money is deducted directly from your checking account so you can't spend more than you actually have.

Don'ts

- Don't forget that a credit card is essentially a loan—you have to pay the credit card companies for the privilege of borrowing their money... there *are* strings attached!
- Never skip payments! Even if you are having a bad month, at the very least pay the minimum *on time*.
- Make sure to not go over your limit. Most student cards have a limit no more than \$1500. If you are not keeping track, it is easy to exceed your limit and get penalized with fees. It is also important to remember that if you are close to your limit, interest charges can push you over the edge—you are then charged more fees and accrue more interest.
- Never buy things you can't afford! You cannot view credit cards as income—view them as tools that can help you establish and build good credit and ease cash flow at the beginning of each semester.
- Don't become a statistic! You don't want to be 30 and still paying off the pizza you bought for your friends sophomore year of college—this might sound crazy but it is reality for many people who are in debt.
- Make sure to not let minimum payments seduce you—a \$1000 balance can take up to 12 years to pay off by only making minimum payments. Over 12 years, the total interest is \$979. Adding as little as \$25 to your monthly payments can shave years off the payoff time.

Article compiled by Becky Bertell—www.yacenter.org; www.uspirg.org & www.collegestudentcreditcard.com

Navigating the Internship Maze

Today employers are basically demanding relevant job experience from recent college graduates, so now is the time to get started on your job or internship search. Most organizations hire interns during the spring semester, so if you were planning to wait until May to start your search, you should reconsider.

First things first, you need to determine your internship goals. Take some time to think about your career interests. Government and Politics and History majors may want to consider interning with a politician. If you attend a Maryland or D.C. school, you are right in the heart of the US government and you should take advantage of the host of opportunities that lie just beyond your campus limits.

It is important for you to figure out what kind of organization you are interested in learning about. There are many options: large corporations

and Fortune 500 companies, nonprofit organizations and non-government organizations, private and public businesses, as well as different kinds of culture within each environment.



Keep in mind that companies with established internship programs will likely have specific guidelines and job responsibilities, relevant career-focused projects to immerse interns in, and goals to reach by summer's end. Another perk is that you might be working among other college students—it's always nice to have a peer group.

One of the most important factors to consider is whether you are going to apply to both paid and unpaid internships. It would be ideal if all opportunities were paid, but the reality is that many do not offer compensation. If you can't afford to work for free, you can try to negotiate a part time position somewhere that really excites you. Another option is to earn credits for your internship. If a particular job is related to your major, you might be able to get approval from an advisor to earn credits. Remember though, you may have to do a project based on your experience, and there could be restrictions on the type of work you do.

Now it's time to polish up that resume and start sending out cover letters. Make sure to visit your school's career center for tips as well as lists of specific opportunities, applications, and deadlines.

CollegeBound's 2nd Annual Race for the Future 5K Run

Do you like to volunteer or get exercise? Get involved with CBF's 5K run to benefit our scholars—you! You can assist with administrative duties, distribute water, or time runners on Saturday, April 17th. Call CBF for more details.



If you are a workout maniac, enjoy running, and would actually like to run the race, that can be arranged as well. Sign up to run at www.active.com (search "CollegeBound") or call 410.783.2905 for a registration form.

Due June 15th

1. Spring 2009 grades
2. At least 10 Volunteer service hours
3. SAR
4. FAAL



Interview Essentials

- Look the Part—appearance matters!
- Arrive *at least* 15 minutes early.
- Research the organization and familiarize yourself with the position.
- Prepare 3 to 5 questions about the position and the company.
- Always show appreciation by saying "THANKS".
- Follow-up—write thank you notes immediately to all interviewers.
- Provide excellent references—teachers, employers, co-workers, mentors, or club leaders all work.

 * Not receiving a *
 * scholarship or grant *
 * from CollegeBound *
 * right now?? *
 * *
 * You may still be *
 * eligible to receive *
 * funding. Contact us to *
 * find out. *
 * *****



CollegeBound Foundation

Building the Pipeline from High School to College to Work

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\$ Apply for Financial Aid \$

Don't forget to file your 2010-11 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. This form qualifies you for thousands of dollars in federal, state and private sources (CBF!!) of financial aid. The deadline is March 1st.

www.collegeboundfoundation.org

Notes to our Scholars

Scholars – Volunteer So You Can Get Somewhere!

In the past week, have you done anything that contributes to your résumé? Too often, college students focus on academics and forget that education is only one part of a résumé. Ensure that your whole package looks tempting to a potential employer. Participate in professional activities and look for volunteer opportunities that have something to do with your career goals. Quality volunteer experience will make you stand out among applicants and often lead to paid employment.

Take advantage of Career Service offices on your campus. Look at bulletin boards for your department. Ask professors if you can help with their research. Investigate service-oriented groups at your school. Alpha Phi Omega (www.apo.org) is a national service fraternity with chapters at many local colleges – get involved!

Now is the time to prepare for a future-building summer. Do not spend summer working retail unless you want to make it a career. Even small amounts of career-related experience can impact post-college careers. Employers want to see skills, so whether you were paid does not matter as much as having real experience.

Consider what skills you have in the following areas and decide which areas you can improve upon: extracurricular activities (especially with leadership positions); coursework; undergraduate research; volunteer and service; internships; paid jobs. Volunteering also helps you clarify interests in work environments. Gain valuable experience while making the world a better place! Get started by going to www.volunteermatch.org; www.idealists.org and www.serve.gov.

Jamie Tang
Retention Specialist

Patrick Young
Retention Specialist

REMINDER!!

Submit the following materials by **June 15, 2010** to renew your award:

1. Unofficial transcript (must include Spring 10 grades)
2. At least 10 hours of community service
3. 2010-11 Student Aid Report (SAR)
4. 2010-11 Financial Aid Award Letter

Dear Scholars,

This newsletter is packed full of useful information for you. If you want to pull up your GPA and want to figure out what grades you need in your classes to do that, check out "Unraveling the Mystery of GPA Calculations." This is a great tool for you whether you have set some lofty goals or if you just want to know how that grade will impact your cumulative GPA.

Are you still looking for some scholarship dollars to foot your bill? Read "Local Money for College Students" for some opportunities, but act fast, because money does run out.

Have you been offered a credit card or do you already have one or more? If you're not sure what the ins and outs of credit cards are, it might be useful to refer to "The Do's and Don'ts of Credit Cards."

And lastly, what are you going to do this summer? Work, volunteer, get an internship, sit on the couch and watch television? Hopefully it is not the latter. Get involved. One of the best things you can do to build your resume and get ready for life after graduation is to participate in an internship in your major field of study. "Navigating the Internship Maze" offers some great tips to get you started.

Enjoy your spring semester and don't forget the June 15th deadline to renew your award/s for next year.

Jamie Martino
Scholarship Program Administrator