

HIGH SCHOOL REGRETS:

1. There are four components that contribute greatly to the college application process:
 - taking rigorous classes in high school and getting good grades in those classes (i.e., having a GPA in which you are proud)
 - scoring well on the SAT and/or ACT; the SAT Subject Tests and AP exams;
 - writing a terrific essay; and
 - taking time to visit college campuses.

But, these four items are only a small part in your college journey. Many high school students agree that they graduated with regrets. Don't overlook the following experiences that can help guide you toward choosing an appropriate college and career:

2. Listen to the cliché advice of joining clubs, a sport or an artistic venture-- something! Seek new experiences. But, don't go overboard by joining too many. The idea is to get involved, to meet new people, to learn new things and be proud of the school you attend. If you learn that you dislike something; don't join that group the following year but don't quit! All of these experiences will open up new worlds to a possible college major or career path.
3. Get to know your teachers. No matter how crazy or evil you think they may seem a teacher can be your best ally. You will never regret making an effort to know your teachers, especially when it comes time for them to write your letters of recommendation during your senior year.
4. Stay true to yourself and let your conscious be your guide. Go out and have fun - but don't have too much fun. Do not change who you are just for the approval of others. A blemished conduct record will only make college applications more difficult.
5. Take the hard class. Yes, you will have to work hard in high school but if offered a challenging class, step up to the plate and take it. Taking honors and AP and dual enrollment courses will increase the rigor of your transcript and will assist in making you more competitive during the college application process.
6. While taking foreign language classes (two years are mandatory for most college applications; three to four years are recommended) actually learn to speak the language. Being fluent in two languages will ultimately help you when looking for a job or launching a new career. (We live in a global society.)
7. Practice study skills while in high school. This will make the transition to college easier as colleges require disciplined academic habits.

8. Think about what you would choose as a college major. Be sure your major is a career path that you would like to follow. Don't choose something just because your best friend or uncle says it's a riveting industry. For instance, if you want to become involved in the health-care industry, then volunteer at a hospital or doctor's office. Job-shadow a nurse. Understand the curriculum required for pre-med or nursing at a college/university you would consider attending. Knowing what is *involved* while in high school could save you thousands of dollars in college if it should turn out that you choose a major that is not what you expected.
9. Sleep. It is impossible to do everything and be perfect at everything and get sleep at the same time. Choose what is important to you and do not stress out about everything else. Keep your academics at the forefront of your priorities, but maintain a proper balance with your social activities.
10. Gain an international perspective. Most U.S. colleges are increasingly becoming global with their population. They also offer study-abroad in most majors. There is nothing better than understanding diversity than experiencing it first-hand. If you are able, take a trip abroad while in high school. Experiencing a different culture will prepare you for what you will experience in college.
11. Talk to more people sooner- expand your social circles while in high school. You may wind-up in a college where you know no one. You'll meet people through your dorm, through classes and through any clubs you may join - but you have to get out and do things. Don't linger in your room (unless you are studying or sleeping). Make it a point to meet one new person each week.