

College Talk Series Part III

Award Letters / Calling College

The following must be turned in as a hard copy to be included with College Talk Series Part III.

Let's take a look at some award letters from OHS class of 2012. By evaluating these letters you will at least get an idea of the cost involved at each school. Remember cost is only one variable involved in selecting a school; you have college prestige, program that you are going into, the value of going away to a four year school or a community college in a different town. All of these items play into your final decision and highlight the long term significance of that decision.

The process that got us to these letters is pretty basic and will repeat itself until you are 26 years old or substantial changes (marriage or homelessness or independence) enter into your life.

- 1 - COLLEGE APPLICATION** - Apply in the Fall - to reach, target, fall back goals
- 2 - FAFSA** - your parent's need to fill it out by March 1. Based on previous year's "family" tax return
- 3 - FAFSA** - if your folks are divorced - **GO LOW. GO LOW. GO LOW!**
- 4 - FAFSA** - determines your expected family contribution (even if they actually contribute zero).
- 5 - FAFSA** - you identify schools that you applied to above where you want FAFSA numbers sent to.
- 6 - SCHOOL** - calculates and mails you a Financial Aid package (based on FAFSA)- complete with loans, grants, work study, and school scholarships that equals the residual after expected family contribution is totaled.
- 7 - ACCEPT or REJECT** - you may choose to reject the package or accept pieces of the package.
- 8 - FINAL RESULT** - if you accept only pieces of the package - you must cover the rest out of pocket
- 9 - EXPECTATIONS** - for the next three years your award letter will probably be similar to your first.
- 10 - SCHOLARSHIPS** - every year you can and must supplement the final bill with scholarships

You'll notice in each of the letters below – that Fall and Winter semesters are identical in funding. So when we work on the letters we will work with one set of numbers only (knowing that it is a times two operation.) This is the manner in which you always get your financial award letter.

[Linked below are Two Financial Aid Letters – University of Michigan and Grand Valley State](#)

Now that you know what is in them...take these financial aid letters apart. Print each of the letters and worksheets out...and write all over them. You will turn in the worksheet copy with this assignment - staple each to the end of the assignment.

I would like you in the blank provided tell me everything that you know about the particular form of financial aid being offered. Pluses minuses everything. Then at the end of the line give that portion of the award letter a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) based on its value to you as a student. Evaluate the best and worst part of the package, total up the coverage, use the linked loan calculator and make estimates. Remember private scholarships are not a portion of this package and can affect your final decision on where to go.

And finally, one year multiplied out four times, will not be a fully accurate evaluation of your final costs. You may get done in three or five years, you may find new funding sources, or lose scholarships and grants. What we are trying to do here is estimate. So, have at it.

- 1 – University of Michigan - [worksheet / financial aid letter](#)
- 2 - Grand Valley State University - [worksheet / financial aid letter](#)

Breaking the Fear - Calling Colleges - Calling Colleges - Calling Colleges

Fear is one of the biggest roadblocks when it comes to preparing for school. The sooner you get over it and get to know the financial aid office and the people who populate it...the better for you. So start calling financial aid offices NOW.

Please do not tell the folks on the other end of the phone that this is a school assignment. They will not take your call as seriously, and you may not get appropriate information.

Every time you call – log the information in on your computer. Date it – summarize your notes and provide the name of the individual who you spoke with. That way you will have a running information sheet and you can ask for the same person the next time. Hopefully you will develop a relationship with that person over the course of your stay. In the end these folks in the financial aid are your lifeline. Make sure to note dates and times and deadlines.

For this section I want you to call your Target or Reach School – go to financial aid office and ask some questions. Also, ask for the Department where you set up tours. Call that department. Get some information on those tours. Finally and for extra credit you can call the Academic Department that you are most interested in and talk to them about their programs ... Use this assignment to set up tours!

I've provided questions to guide you through the conversation, however feel absolutely free to run off script and ask your own. Write everything down - for this assignment and in real life. As I said, you want to find a financial aid officer who you click with. Then go back over and over and over again throughout your stay to that particular individual.

The more you get used to being in contact with the institution, the better the opportunities that will head your way.

You may do this with a partner and use the same the information - lets get moving...

College or University: _____

General Phone Number: _____

Financial Aid Phone Number: _____

Department Phone Number: _____

Questions and Notes on Financial Aid:

Name of Financial Aid Officer _____

You may be steered to the website on the phone. Tell the individual that you work better with a person - and maybe they will steer you thought site. So have your computer open and in front of you. Ask about grants. Do these grants have GPA requirements attached to them? How much can you get? Are they renewable? What are the deadlines?

Do you have Scholarships for incoming transfer students? Do these scholarships have GPA requirements attached to them? How much can you get? Are they renewable? What are the deadlines?

Living on Campus - what are the requirements? What are the options? How much does it cost?

Campus Tours - You need to take campus tours...If you plan on MCC, then you need to tour your next step in order to integrate it as soon as possible into your long range plans. So lets get on it. Find the number and call them. How do you set up a tour, what does the tour consist of, what will I learn...go to the point of setting up a tour. List all of the specifics below. If you set up a tour, include a stop by the academic office that you intend to go into. Note that information below as well **If you actually go and do the tour - tell me - Extra Credit.**
