Dear Freshmen:

Welcome to NDP! This Freshman guide has been created to help you navigate high school and prepare for the college admissions process. You will be using the information provided in this booklet to help you understand, organize, and track your high school experience.

As your counselors, we are here to support you academically, emotionally, and spiritually as you prepare for the next chapter of your life: College! We will work together to make sure you are hitting yearly goals, maintaining a strong GPA, challenging yourself academically, and becoming the most well-rounded student you can be. We look forward to working together and helping make the high school process as smooth as possible.

Here is some important information to keep handy:

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## **Graduation Requirements**

To receive an NDP Diploma, a student must complete **thirty (30)** credits total; **twenty-eight (28)** academic credits and **two (2)** Christian Service credits.

The required courses for all students in the Class of 2026 are:

Theology 4 credits English 4 credits Mathematics 4 credits Science 4 credits Social Studies 4 credits World Language 3 credits (Must be sequential and in same language) Fine Arts 2 credits (two courses must be sequential and in the same discipline) Technology .5 credit Personal Fitness .5 credit Personal Health & Wellness 1 credit Elective Courses 1 credit Christian Service 2 credits (.5 credits per year)

# Graduating with Distinction

There are two options for graduating with distinction: Summa Cum Laude and Magna Cum Laude. If you plan to consider this path, there are some important things to take note of:

Honors at Graduation for Class of 2026							
	Summa Cum Laude Magna Cum Laude						
Credits:	32	32					
Weighted GPA:	4.0 3.85						
Comments:	-Rising seniors are considered to have met the Graduate with Distinction language requirements if they have completed a 4 <sup>th</sup> level of World Language at NDP. For example, if a current junior successfully completes Spanish 4 this year, that student need not take another Spanish class to fulfill the requirement.						

# Grade Point Average (GPA)

You will hear the word GPA often over the next 4 years. Your GPA is used for:

- → College admissions and scholarships
- → Identifying National Honor Society candidates
- → Academic advisement
- → Much more!

GPA is an <u>averaged</u> score which is calculated based on your <u>final semester</u> <u>grade</u> for each class and the <u>weight</u> of the courses you are taking.

#### The grading scale is:

A = 93%-100%	4.00	B- = 80%-82%	2.67	D+ = 67%-69%	1.33
A- = 90%-92%	3.67	C+ = 77%-79%	2.33	D = 63%-66%	1.00
B+ = 87%-89%	3.33	C = 73%-76%	2.00	D- = 60%-62%	0.67
B = 83%-86%	3.00	C-=70%-72%	1.67	F = 0%-59%	0.00

 $\rightarrow$  An <u>Honors</u> class carries a weight of 0.50 added to the grade earned.

 $\rightarrow$  An <u>AP</u> class carries a weight of 1.0 added to the grade earned.

Example: Oliver takes 8 classes. One class is an honors class. **His GPA would be 3.69.** (Calculated by adding up the points and dividing by the number of classes).

English: B (84%) = 3.00Social Studies: B+ (88%) = 3.33Math: B (83%) = 3.00Science: A- (90%) = 3.67Honors Spanish: A (97%) = 4.00 + .50 Honors weight= 4.50PE: A (95%) = 4.00Theology: A (96%) = 4.00Art: A (93%) = 4.00 Total points = 29.5 29.5 ÷ 8 classes = **3.69 GPA** 

# **Dual Enrollment**

Dual Enrollment (DE) courses are college level courses offered on campus at NDP. You can begin taking DE courses sophomore year.

For an additional fee, you can receive college credit for these courses and begin your college GPA while in high school. This saves time and money by getting those college credits completed early.

Not every college will accept Dual Enrollment transfer credits. All Arizona state universities do, and a good resource is <u>www.aztransfer.com</u>. For out-of-state universities/colleges, check their individual transfer credit policies to know if the DE credit will transfer.

Here is a list of Dual Enrollment classes we are currently offering through Scottsdale Community College unless otherwise specified:

- US History Honors\*\*
- English 3 Honors\*\*
- English 4 Honors\*\*
- Pre-Calculus Honors\*\*
- Calculus Honors\*\*
- French 3 Honors\*\*
- French 4 Honors\*\*
- Guitar Orchestra
- Engineering & Design (University of Arizona)
- Ethics, Economy, & Entrepreneurship Honors (University of Arizona)
- Rock Music & Culture
- Music Theory

\*\*All DE courses are considered regular level classes and do not add weight to your GPA **except** for the honors classes listed above.

# Factors in Selective College Admissions

- Grades Your freshman year grades do count!
- Strength of Curriculum Colleges are looking to see what courses Notre Dame Prep offers and how students challenge themselves within what was available.
- Standardized Test Scores Colleges accept either the ACT or the SAT. Please be aware that many schools are moving towards test optional.
- **Essay** This is where you can showcase your personality and share information not already in your application.
- Letters of Recommendation Schools may require teacher and/or counselor letters of recommendation. Develop a good rapport with your teachers and counselor!
- Extracurricular Activities Colleges want to know how you are spending your time outside of school. It's all about the *quality* of involvement, not *quantity*.
- What Colleges are Looking for each Year this "7th factor" is difficult because we do not know what colleges will be looking for year-to-year.

#### Additional admission considerations:

- **Special Talents** This applies mostly to arts and athletics where a sample of student work/performance is required.
- Legacy Some schools give preference to applicants who have relatives that are alumni of the school.
- **Geographic Mix** Each college is trying to have representation from across the country.
- **Exceptional Academic Talent** Independent research, a science fair project, or National Merit recognition may be what singles you out.
- **Diversity of Background and Cultures** Each college is working to create a diverse student body.
- **Demonstrated Interest** Colleges want to know you are interested in them. This can be by attending college visits (in-person or virtual) at NDP, college fairs, campus tours, or contacting the admissions team directly.
- **Institutional Need** Difficult to predict. Specific items colleges are looking for year-to-year.

# Standardized Testing

## PSAT

- → Taken in the fall of sophomore and junior year
- $\rightarrow$  Taken at NDP, free of cost, during the school day
- → NDP requires that students take this practice test in anticipation of the official SAT
- → Junior year PSAT scores will determine if you qualify to be a National Merit Scholar
- → Scores may be used to identify students eligible to take Dual Enrollment courses
- → Scores are used in the appeal process for Honors/AP classes

## **Practice ACT**

- → Taken in the spring of sophomore and/or junior year
- $\rightarrow$  Taken at NDP, for a fee, outside of school hours
- → Optional, but highly encouraged that students take this to prepare for the official ACT

## SAT & ACT

- → Taken in the spring of junior year
- → The test serves as a predictor of how students will perform academically during their freshman year in college
- → Scores will be used for college admission decisions, scholarships, and placement in college courses

How to prepare for the tests

- → Khan Academy
- → ACT Academy
- → Dictionary.com
- → Albert
- → Reading a book during your free time
- → Test prep tutoring and classes
  - Not recommended until junior year
  - Counselors can provide you with a list of referrals

\*\*If you have any questions about the tests or how to better understand your scores--please reach out to your counselor

# **Extracurricular Activities**

- → When it comes to extracurriculars, we always emphasize quality over quantity.
  - Colleges are not interested that you have joined every club our school has to offer. Instead, they are looking for a student who is involved in 1-2 activities for all four years, takes on a leadership role, and is passionate about the work that they are doing. This rule applies to clubs, sports, fine arts, jobs, volunteering, etc.
- → Please see the NDP website for information on athletics, clubs, and fine arts offered on our campus.
- → If you don't find something you are interested in on our current list, you can start a new club! If you need help locating information on clubs or you would like to know how to start your own club, see your counselor.

# **College Visits**

Throughout the fall, colleges and universities all over the country and the world will hold information sessions just for NDP students. This is a great opportunity to learn more about your dream school and meet with admissions representatives who will be reading your application in the next few years.

- Sign up on SCOIR
- Sign up at least 24 hours in advance
- Each college will give information about how to register for visits
- Every NDP student is allowed an unlimited number of visits with college reps as long as you are eligible (No D's or F's in your classes)
- Classes cannot be missed for college visits if a quiz or test is being administered

# **College Admission Trends**

- → COVID-19. Many colleges are making policy changes due to the novel coronavirus and the limitations that this pandemic brings. For example, some colleges are no longer requiring SAT & ACT scores for admission. This is ever changing, so please look at each college's website for up-to-date information.
- → More students applying, more competition. There has been a large increase in applications for admission, resulting in a decline in the percentage of students accepted. This means increased competition. The more applications a school receives, the more selective it can afford to be.
- → New Majors. Majors continue to merge into interesting new areas of study, such as intelligence studies, corporate and governmental security, forensic chemistry and toxicology, sports business management, professional convention management, bioarcheology, cyber-security, and courses in the medical field.
- → Funding. Generally, more funds are allocated towards need-based (financial need) aid rather than merit-based (academic excellence) aid. Loans continue to be the primary means of federal aid to students, comprising nearly half of the aid received.
- → Medical Schools. They seek undergraduates who have studied majors in their fields of interest, can write articulately, speak publicly, are wellrounded, and interesting. The highest rate of acceptance into medical school is from liberal arts and sciences colleges where students have strong relationships with professors.

# **Skills Needed to Maximize Your Chances for Admission**

- **Communication Skills:** being able to make your point in writing and in person.
- **Organizational Skills:** being able to effectively stay on top of multiple activities.
- Leadership: the ability to motivate classmates to make effective change.
- **Critical Thinking Skills & Logic:** intelligence and problem-solving skills, from analytical to creative.
- Effort: a strong desire to succeed.
- **Group Skills:** being part of a team and collaborating with others.
- Initiative: seeing a need and taking action on your own to achieve a goal.
- **Be an independent learner.** Don't just do the bare minimum. Read books that interest you or contact professionals in your areas of interest.
- **Be you!** Don't live your high school years obsessing about what you should be doing to please a college admissions officer. The most impressive college applications show that you have pursued your passions, and that you have lived your life according to the values you profess.
- **Growth Mindset!** The most selective universities reject as many wonderful and talented groups of students as they admit. If you are not offered admission, don't get discouraged! Have confidence that the right college will find you!

# SCOIR 101

**SCOIR** is a college and career readiness platform. It will help you to search for colleges, learn more about each college, sign up for college visits, match you with potential careers, keep a resume, and much more.

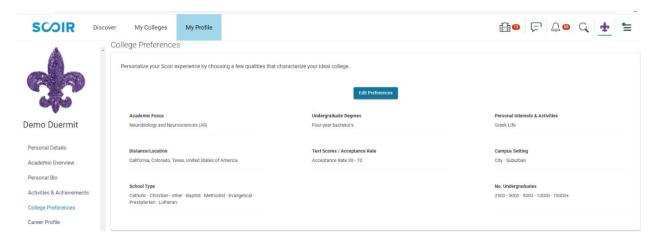
**SCOIR** is one of the best tools we have regarding the college process. This is a college prep school, so we want you to be thinking about and become familiar with this tool as early on as possible.

All freshman students and parents will receive access information.

### **College Preferences**

Personalize your SCOIR experience by choosing a few qualities that characterize your ideal college. Use this as a guide to start asking yourself what you value in a college. Then, your counselor can suggest schools to you based on your preferences

"My Profile"  $\Rightarrow$  "College Preferences"  $\Rightarrow$  "+ Add"



### **Discover**

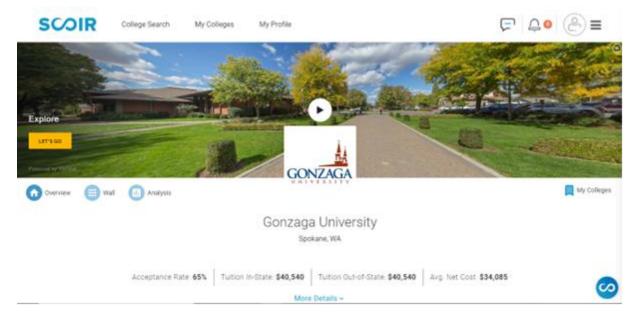
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Discover is a college search tool and is a great starting point for the college search process. You can enter information into a set of filters: majors, school size, location, acceptance rate, and much more. The search will then create a list of schools that fit the criteria you have entered. You can then "pin" colleges to save them to your "My Colleges" list.

"Discover"  $\Rightarrow$  "Search"

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Interests & Activities						Add to Compare
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Focuses & Majors						Add to Compare
Undergraduate Degrees	~ ~		<b>Æ</b> 5	Abilene Christian University Abilene, TX	Average SAT Score 1122 Acceptance Rate 61%	Average ACT Score 24 No. Undergrads 3,525
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You can then click on each college to find more detailed information. This includes acceptance rate, cost, virtual tours, student life, makeup of the student body, retention rates, top majors, and proximity to transportation.



## My Colleges - Following

You can add colleges to your "My Colleges" list. This will help you and your counselor to keep track of your schools as you go through the college search process.

"My Colleges"  $\Rightarrow$  Add and view colleges under "Following"

						Recommendations and Ree Walvers	sort by Deadline 🗧
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# Sign Up for College Visits

Many college admissions representatives visit NDP during the school year (virtually and in-person). They give a 30-40 minute presentation about their college or university, and allow time for the students to ask questions. These visits occur during the school day.

Home Page  $\Rightarrow$  "Register for Visits & Office Hours"  $\Rightarrow$  "Count Me In"

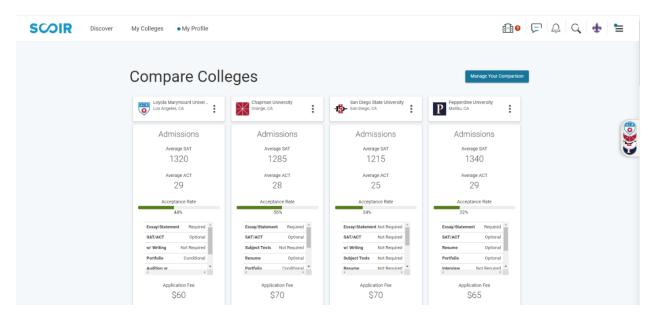
**OR** click the 3 horizontal lines in the top right  $\Rightarrow$  "Events & Deadlines"  $\Rightarrow$  "Count Me In"

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All Upcoming Visits     Visits from My Colleges     Only My Registered Visits		21 The	West Chester University of Pen	Time: 1200 PM - 0100 PM Location: 180	0	View	Count Me In
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			May 2019	Location: TBD	Registered		Count Me In
		3	Villanova University	<b>Time:</b> 09100 AM - 10100 AM	•	Vew	$\langle \rangle$

## **Compare & Contrast**

Do a side-by-side comparison of up to four schools. In this view, you can really see the differences and similarities between the colleges.

Click the 3 horizontal lines in the top right  $\Rightarrow$  "Compare Colleges"  $\Rightarrow$  "Add College"



### Creating a Resume

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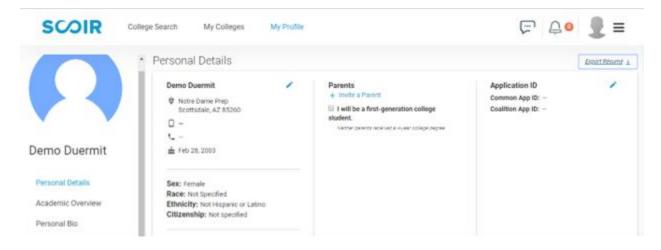
SCOIR makes it easy to create a resume. This is something that can be created early and updated throughout your high school career. You can enter your information in item-by-item, and SCOIR will create a resume for you.

"My Profile"  $\Rightarrow$  "Activities & Achievements"  $\Rightarrow$  "+ Add"

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	Athletics	+ Add
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Demo Duermit		
	Community Service	
Personal Details	Feed My Starving Children	2
Academic Overview	Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior 2 hours/week, 8 weeks/year	
Personal Bio	Packaged meals to be shipped to third world countries.	
Activities & Achievements		
College Preferences	Clubs and Activities	
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To Download Your Resume:

"My Profile"  $\Rightarrow$  "Personal Details"  $\Rightarrow$  "Export Resume"



# **Study Skills**

After your first big test, you will wonder if there was a way you could have better prepared. The answer is...Yes!

Here are some tips and tricks our previous students have used to be successful at NDP while also managing the stress that comes with high school level courses.

- Find a quiet place and put the electronics away (Airplane mode)
- Concentrate with intention
- Set a study goal
- Vary your study activities
- Set up a system
- Take breaks
- Flashcards

- Set a timer
- Keep a planner
- Read chapters backwards
- Practice
- Use study skills for how you learn (visual, auditory)
- Create a study schedule
- Quiz yourself

Below are some tips on how to reduce stress. The counseling department is also available if you are feeling overwhelmed.

- Stress ball
- Take breaks
- Deep breaths
- Think of a "happy place"
- Exercise
- Be in nature

- Write in a journal
- Talk to your counselor or a trusted adult
- Positive self-talk
- Listen to music
- Snuggle with family pets

# **Recommendations for Freshmen**

#### **Academics**

- Given States Focus on your grades
- Evaluate your course load and take an appropriate level of coursework for YOU
- Increase your commitment in extra-curricular activities and keep a resume
- Meet with your counselor

#### Testing

- Look ahead and start to develop a standardized testing plan
- Download the dictionary.com app on your phone
- Read for fun!
- Look into test prep courses
- □ Khan Academy & ACT Academy

#### <u>College</u>

Become familiar with college planning and the admissions process

- Expand your knowledge about prospective schools by attending college fairs and information sessions
- Log on to SCOIR and utilize College Search tools

# NDP Counseling Curriculum

Here is a timeline of events over the next four (4) years when counselors will be meeting with you and/or your student. We may be calling your student to the counseling office additional times. You or your student are welcome to make an appointment at any point throughout the year.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Fall

- Freshmen Parent Night

- Presentations in classrooms regarding academics, college planning, and personal/social readiness

- Individual student meetings for introduction and check-in.

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Spring

- Presentation in classrooms regarding course registration for next year

- Individual student meetings to discuss required courses to take sophomore year.

Students will receive a copy of the NDP Credit Checklist

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Fall

- Presentation in sophomore classrooms regarding the PSAT

- Individual student meetings with assigned counselor for an introduction and to check in

### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Spring

- Presentation in classrooms regarding course registration for next year.

- Presentation in sophomore classrooms regarding academics, college planning, and personal/social readiness

- Individual student meetings to review PSAT scores and courses to take junior year <u>11<sup>th</sup> Grade Fall</u>

- Presentation in junior classrooms regarding the PSAT.

- Individual student meetings

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Spring

- Junior parent night: "College 101"
- Presentation in classrooms regarding course registration for next year

- Presentation in junior classrooms regarding the college application process

- Individual parent/student meetings for college planning

#### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Fall

- Presentation in senior classrooms regarding the college application process

- Individual parent/student meetings for college planning

### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Spring

- Senior Awards Night
- Individual student meetings for final check-in

# **Action Plans for Parents**

### **Freshman Year Action Plan**

- Make the most of high school make sure your student is enrolled in challenging courses.
- Monitor academic progress log on to PowerSchool or Canvas for current grade and attendance information.
- Help your student get organized and budget his/her time. It's important to schedule time to complete homework assignments, prepare for tests and quizzes, complete projects and still have time for social activities.
- Help your student build a resume. Keep a folder that contains records of Christian service, honors and awards.
- Encourage your student to get involved in activities that he/she enjoys. Colleges like to see involvement in activities throughout the high school years because it shows focus and commitment.
- Encourage your student to volunteer for Christian Service.
- In February, review your student's course request form, making sure he/she has selected appropriate courses for the sophomore year.
- Encourage summer reading. Look on the NDP website for information regarding required summer reading for sophomore English classes.

## Sophomore Year Action Plan

- Continue to monitor academic progress.
- Your student will take the PSAT in October.
- Help your student review his/her results on the PSAT and use as a study guide in preparing for the PSAT to be taken again in junior year.

- In February, review your student's course request form.
- Start attending college nights and college fairs with your student. Students should begin developing a preliminary list of colleges.
- Continue to encourage your student to update his/her resume.
- Encourage your student to stay involved in school and community-based extracurricular activities.
- Encourage summer reading. Look on the NDP website for information regarding required summer reading for junior English classes.

### Junior Year Action Plan

- Continue to monitor academic progress. Encourage your student to keep his/her grades up remember that junior year is the last full year of grades that colleges and universities will see for admission.
- Your student will take the PSAT in October. Remember, it is during junior year that students enter in the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Help your student register online to take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring of junior year (<u>www.collegeboard.org</u> OR <u>www.act.org</u>).
- In February, review your student's course request form, encouraging them to take challenging classes.
- Attend the Junior Parent College Presentation in January.
- Review materials and information with your student that is presented to all juniors in the college preparation lesson taught by the counselors in February.
- Attend the Junior Parent/Student Individual Meetings with counselors.
- If applicable, make sure your student has registered for Advanced Placement exams.
- Help your student review their resume. The resume should include clubs, sports, and Christian Service and potential leadership opportunities.
- Encourage your student to take responsibility for college planning. It is important to keep on top of things and take the initiative.
- Encourage your student to begin searching for scholarships. Be sure your student registers on a scholarship website, such as <u>www.fastweb.com</u> or <u>www.goingmerry.com</u>, amongst other options.
- Attend college nights and arrange college visits with your student.
- Help your student narrow his/her college list.

- If your student qualifies, encourage him/her to take Honors, AP, and/or Dual Enrollment classes.
- Student athletes should register with the NCAA and NAIA eligibility centers: <u>www.eligibilitycenter.org</u>; <u>www.playnaia.org</u>.

## **Senior Year Action Plan**

- Continue to monitor your student's academic progress.
- Encourage your student to update resume.
- Review with your student the "College Planning 101" booklet to make sure he/she is keeping up with timelines.
- Encourage your student to meet with college and university representatives when they visit the NDP campus.
- Check NDP counseling website for available scholarships.
- Discuss finances with your student.
- Together with your student, submit the FAFSA electronically (www.fafsa.ed.gov) after October 1.
- If applicable, make sure your student has registered for Advanced Placement exams.
- Discuss with your student his/her final college choices.
- Check dates for registering for college most offer parent nights and/or parent weekends.
- WATCH WITH PRIDE AS YOUR SENIOR GRADUATES!

Notes