Guide for Preparing Your Students

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Georgia Student Finance Commission

Georgia Apply to College Initiative Supporters
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Greetings Georgia Apply to College Site Coordinator!

Student preparation is key to ensuring your school’s Georgia Apply to College event is a success. By spending a little time researching colleges and gathering the information typically requested on a college admission application beforehand, students can make the most of their time spent participating in their school’s event. This Guide for Preparing Your Students has been developed to help participating schools ensure their students are not only ready to successfully apply to college, but ready to apply to a college that will be a good match for them.

As with all of the Georgia Apply to College materials, this Guide has been developed to help make planning and holding a successful Georgia Apply to College event as easy as possible. We encourage you to select the activities included in this Guide that will meet the needs of your school and your students whether in-person or virtually. It is not necessary for all activities to be completed prior to your event if they do not work for your school.

If you have any questions about the activities found in this Guide or have any suggestions on how we can improve our materials, please don’t hesitate to let us know by emailing gac@gsfc.org or calling 770.724.9065.

The Georgia Apply to College State Initiative
ACTIVITY 1: CREATING A GAfutures.org ACCOUNT

OVERVIEW: GAfutures.org is Georgia’s resource to help students explore, plan, apply and find affordable ways to pay for college. GAfutures provides a more user-friendly and responsive experience for students. The website has a national college search as well as an interactive map of all Georgia institutions that are eligible to participate in GSFC-administered programs such as HOPE. Students must have a GAfutures account to apply to participating colleges.

The Student Prep Sheet is designed to be completed by students prior to their school’s Georgia Apply to College event and can be started in this activity. By completing the Prep Sheet beforehand and bringing it with them to their school’s event, students can be sure they have the information they need to successfully complete a college admission application.

OBJECTIVES: In this activity, students will:
- Create a GAfutures account.
- Begin a Georgia Apply to College Student Prep Sheet (Appendix A of this Guide).

MATERIALS: For this activity, the following are needed:
- Each student will need to be seated at a computer with internet access.
- Each student will need to be provided a blank Student Prep Sheet (Appendix A of this Guide)

TIME TO COMPLETE: Approximately 10-15 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Begin by providing each student with a blank Student Prep Sheet. Students will begin work on the prep sheet in this activity. The prep sheet will also be utilized in other activities and it is recommended that students bring the sheet with them to their Georgia Apply to College event, so it is important that they keep it in a safe place or you may wish to collect the sheets at the conclusion of your session with the students.
2. Instruct students to open a web browser such as Internet Explorer, Safari or Firefox.

3. They should then navigate to **www.GAfutures.org**.

4. Then click on **Create an Account**.

5. Complete the **Create Account** form. If you had a GAcollege411 account, you should be able to sign in with the same Username and Password. Simply click on Sign In at the top of the page. If you cannot remember your Username and Password, you can use the **Forgot Username** or **Forgot Password** function on the Sign In pop-up. Or you can create a new account. The items with red asterisks (*) are required fields.
6. Once students have completed the Create Account Form, they should check the box at the bottom of the page to indicate they have read and accepted the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Then click the **Create Account** button.

7. Once the student clicks **Create Account**, the student’s *My GAfutures* dashboard will come up. The student has successfully created their *GAfutures* account and are now able to complete a college application through the website.
ACTIVITY 2: The College Search

OVERVIEW: Students can begin to research colleges using the College Search on GAfutures.

OBJECTIVES: In this activity, students will:
- Learn how to conduct an online college search using different variables.

MATERIALS: For this activity, the following are needed:
- Each student will need to be seated at a computer with internet access.

TIME TO COMPLETE: Approximately 5-10 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Once students are seated at a computer, instruct them to open a web browser, such as Chrome, Firefox or Safari.
2. They should then navigate to GAfutures.
3. They should sign in to their already created GAfutures account by clicking Sign In and then entering their account name and password.
4. Once logged on, students should click on the College Planning tab.
5. Then, click on the **National College Search**.

6. Once on the **College Search** page, students can search by various criteria or by keyword (school name, city, etc.)

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Students can search for State of Georgia or National colleges. Note: Selecting a State of Georgia college will take you to the Colleges’ Systems or Association website.
7. When reviewing national schools, a keyword search for ‘University of Florida’ brings up the following overview page with quick facts about the school including the application fee, necessary school codes, tuition costs and average test scores.

8. The left-side menu allows students to find more specific information about the school including housing and transportation, admissions, academic opportunities, student life, and the cost of attendance and financial aid options.
9. Students can also search for colleges by different criteria. **College Type** includes the option to search for schools eligible for state aid programs such as HOPE; two or four year schools; public or private; and how many students are currently enrolled.

10. Students can also search by **Location**. They can search by state and whether they want an urban, rural or suburban setting.
11. Students can choose the type of housing they want to live in and transportation options by clicking **Housing & Transportation**.

Housing Options include dorms, on-campus apartments or coed housing.

12. The **Admissions** option allows students to search by test score and GPA requirements.
13. If students are looking for schools with specific programs of study, they can search for these under **Academic Opportunities**.

14. The **Student Life** section helps students find school with certain extracurricular activities such as sports, band, theater, a campus newspaper, or fraternities and sororities.
15. **Tuition Cost and Financial Aid** are two of the most important aspects of college planning. Students can explore schools with a certain range of tuition, the percent of students who receive financial aid and what type of financial aid might be available.

16. Once students have determined their top three college choices, they should enter these onto their Student Prep Sheet.

Once their top three college choices have been identified, students should enter them on the Student Prep Sheet.
17. Now that students have selected three colleges that they think they may be interested in attending, now is a great time for them to begin thinking about application fees. Students can explore the application fee charged by the institution by going to the institution’s Campus Tour. Once the application fee is located, students should make a note of it on their Student Prep Sheet. Now is also a good time to encourage students who may be eligible for a fee waiver, such as a College Board or ACT fee waiver, to meet with their counselor to determine eligibility and to obtain the necessary paperwork.
ACTIVITY 7: COMPLETING THE STUDENT PREP SHEET

OVERVIEW: In this activity students will gather information needed to successfully complete an admission application. For example, students may be asked to provide information such as test scores, residency, extra-curricular activities and other information that may require the help of a high school counselor, parent/guardian, or test score information online/from a testing agency.

OBJECTIVES: In this activity, students will:
- Gather information typically needed to successfully complete a college admission application.
- Complete the remaining sections of the Student Prep Sheet.

MATERIALS: For this activity, the following are needed:
- Each student should have their already started Student Prep Sheet.

TIME TO COMPLETE: Approximately 15 minutes plus additional time at home with their parent/guardian and/or time meeting with their high school counselor.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. We recommend that schools utilize the Sample Parent/Guardian Communication found in the Site Coordinator Handbook before using this activity to inform parents that their child may need their assistance completing the Student Prep Sheet and preparing to apply to college.

2. Begin by giving students an overview of the types of information is typically requested on a college admission application, such as residency, test score and extra-curricular information. Let them know that while this information may vary from college to college, it is helpful to gather the information beforehand so they can be sure they can successfully apply during their school’s Georgia Apply to College event.

3. Review the types of information requested on the Student Prep Sheet and let them know who may be able to help them obtain the information. For example, to obtain test score information, it may be helpful for them to meet with their high school counselor or to look their scores up on the testing agency website.

4. Conclude this activity by reminding students of the date of your school’s Georgia Apply to College event. Inform them that they must have their Student Prep Sheet completed prior to the event in order to ensure they are able to successfully apply to college.
APPENDIX A
THE STUDENT PREP SHEET
Student Prep Sheet

Name: ____________________________________________
GAfutures Account Name: ____________________________________________
GAfutures Password (Optional): ____________________________________________

Instructions: Complete this prep sheet and bring it with you to your school’s Georgia Apply to College event. Be sure to keep this sheet in a safe place, especially if you provide your password above.

I plan to apply to…
1\textsuperscript{st} Choice: ______________________ Application fee: ______
2\textsuperscript{nd} Choice: ______________________ Application fee: ______
3\textsuperscript{rd} Choice: ______________________ Application fee: ______

Test Score Information
Most applications for admission request information related to the tests that you have taken. If you have already taken the SAT, ACT or TOEFL enter your test information below.

SAT
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________

ACT
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________

TOEFL
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Test Date and Scores: ____________________________________________
Extra-Curricular Activities
Some applications request information related to the activities that you participate in outside of your high school classes. This could include clubs, organizations or any other activity that you want to share with the college. List your activities below, including the year completed and if you held a position related to the activity. Attach an additional sheet of paper if additional activities need to be listed.

Activity 1:__________________________________________________________

Activity 2:__________________________________________________________

Activity 3:__________________________________________________________

Activity 4:__________________________________________________________

Activity 5:__________________________________________________________

Personal Information
Many colleges will need for you to provide information related to your residency and citizenship. The following are some of the information you may need to provide when completing your application. If you are uncertain about any question, your parent or guardian may be able to help.

Place of Birth:  City: _______________ State: _______________ Country: _______________

County of Residency: __________ Have you ever lived outside of Georgia? Yes No
If yes:
How many years have you lived in Georgia? _______________
When did you move to Georgia? _______________ (mm/dd/yyyy)
Why did you move to Georgia? ____________________________________________

Citizenship Status
US citizen Permanent Resident Alien Nonresident Alien Other

Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) pay state income taxes last year? Yes No
If Yes, in which state? ____________________________

Do you have a parent or guardian who is currently on active duty in the military? Yes No

Employment Information
List any employment you have held for the last two years, including dates:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
List any employment held by your parent(s) or guardian for the last two years, including dates:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________