



## **College Application Timeline: Robinson IB Class of 2021**

- **Required now:** 1) Fill out the Recommendation “Brag” Sheet (located on Naviance under “tasks assigned to me”) Please upload the completed form on Naviance by Monday June 15 at 11:59 pm. 2) Ask your parent(s) to send in a letter describing your strengths, interests, and what makes you special to Mr. Driscoll at [daniel.driscoll@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:daniel.driscoll@sdhc.k12.fl.us). The questions appear at the end of this form. Please ask your parent(s) to send it in before June 15th) If you are applying to colleges that require letters of recommendation, this is the time to ask two teachers if they will write you a letter.
- **To Do List, Item 1: Explore colleges you might be interested in attending.** You can do this on line (Naviance is a great searching tool!) or schedule on-campus visits to colleges to narrow down your choices to a good balance of “likely – possible – reach” colleges. Many students like to choose **1 to 3 likely schools** (where your GPA and SAT/ACT are on the high end of a recently admitted freshman class), **2 to 4 possible schools** (where your numbers put you in the middle range of admitted freshmen), and **1 to 3 reach schools** (where your GPA/test scores place you on the lower end of previously admitted students).

**Good college search tools:** Naviance: [student.naviance.com](http://student.naviance.com) , College Board: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>, College Navigator by the US Dept. of Education website <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>; ACT website: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org),
- **This summer To Do List, Item 2: Narrow down your list of colleges:** Think about your fit with each college in four different ways 1) **Physical fit:** in Florida or out of state, distance from home, urban vs. rural, climate, campus size; 2) **Academic fit:** majors and specialties, class size, research and internships, graduation rates, career placement; 3) **Social fit:** campus life, athletics, organizations and clubs, diversity; and 4) **Financial fit:** go to each college’s website to access their net price calculator, expected cost of attendance, and scholarships.
- **This summer To Do List, Item 3: Write your Common App/College essay:** The prompts for the new Common App/Coalition essays are listed below. Summer is a good time to start a profile on the Common App website at <https://www.commonapp.org> Review all the great resources on this website, including the grid that lists the application deadlines and requirements for the over 800 colleges that accept the Common App. You can start applying to these colleges when the Common App opens up their website for applications usually on August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **This summer To Do List, Item 4: Learn about how to apply for Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Follow this link to a great explanation of financial aid and the steps you’ll need to take to apply: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college>. Learn the difference between need based vs. merit based aid. For need-based aid, you will need to complete the FAFSA in order to qualify for Pell Grants, work-study, loans, etc. You will apply for need based financial aid starting on October 1 of your senior year at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

- **More options for merit-based scholarships:** For merit based aid – visit each college’s website financial aid page, Naviance, Hillsborough County School’s website Scholarship matrix at <http://guidanceservices.mysdhc.org/matrix/scholarshipmatrix.pdf>, Bright Futures info at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org), and sign up for scholarship search engines (e.g., fastweb.com, scholarships.com, raise.me).
- **In the fall, pay attention to college application deadlines:** Many Florida public universities have rolling admission - FAU, FGCU, FIU, UCF, UNF, UWF – but it is best to apply as early as possible! Public university deadlines that often surprise students: FSU and UF around Nov. 1. Early Action/Early Decision colleges (many private and selective colleges) often have deadlines around Oct 15 or Nov. 1. Many colleges have regular action deadlines in early January. Check each college’s websites for specific deadlines.
- **Scholarship deadlines in the fall:** “Big name” top scholarships with fall deadlines include Questbridge (late Sept), Barnes (mid-Oct), Coca-Cola (end of Oct), Ronald McDonald HACER (mid-Dec), and Gates (mid-Jan). Big college scholarships are throughout the Fall- look at the school and their options. You might need to be nominated for these scholarships- let your school counselor know and follow the remind. Hillsborough Education Foundation applications generally open in mid-Nov and can be accessed at [www.educationfoundation.com](http://www.educationfoundation.com).

### **2020-2021 Common Application Essay Prompts**

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

#### Optional Covid-19 Prompt

Community disruptions such as COVID-19 and natural disasters can have deep and long-lasting impacts. If you need it, this space is yours to describe those impacts. Colleges care about the effects on your health and well-being, safety, family circumstances, future plans, and education, including access to reliable technology and quiet study spaces.

- Do you wish to share anything on this topic? Y/N
- Please use this space to describe how these events have impacted you.

The question will be optional and will appear in the Additional Information section of the application. The response length will be limited to 250 words.

### **How do I actually apply to College?**

Students apply to college one of three ways, all of which are online. Students can use:

1) **the Common Application (commonly known as the CommonApp.org)**

a) There are over 800 schools you can apply to using the CommonApp. The CommonApp syncs seamlessly with Naviance (Naviance Student), our application system, and allows us to send your documents (transcripts and letters of recommendation) electronically. It also allows us to track where the documents are at any given time.

2) **a College's own unique school-specific application**

b) When students apply using a unique school-specific application (FGCU or USF, for instance), the process is relatively straightforward, and we in the counseling office are still able to send documents electronically through Naviance.

### **What is the The SSAR and who uses it?**

**FGCU, FSU, UF, and possibly more Colleges:** In order to submit your grades, you will use the SSAR, which is the student self-reported academic record that lists the courses and associated grades that have been attempted, or will be attempted, for **high school** and/or college credit. It replaces the **high school** transcripts used by **Admissions** during the initial review process.

### **When should I apply?**

**Answer: the earlier the better (more opportunity to qualify for scholarships!). This means apply before the school's deadline. Some even open their applications in the summer.**

Regardless of the specific deadlines of colleges, RHS IB has its own internal deadlines for submission of transcript and recommendation requests: On Naviance (Naviance Student) You must add the schools to which you are applying, request the transcript, and request the teacher and counselor recommendation by Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>

**\*\*\*Please note: all college transcripts and recommendations must be listed and requested by October 1 on Naviance. No exceptions.\*\*\***

### **Request for a letter from junior parents**

This is optional. Please help me write my Counselor report for your son or daughter's college applications. Together with the letters of recommendation that teachers will be writing on your child's behalf, the goal of the Counselor report is to present as holistic a portrait of your child as possible. Please answer the following questions and elaborate as much as you'd like to. I will assume that you have shared what you've written with your son or daughter unless you tell me otherwise. Please send in the answers to these questions by June 15, by emailing them to me at [daniel.driscoll@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:daniel.driscoll@sdhc.k12.fl.us)

- 1) Describe one or two major events that you see as turning points in your son or daughter's development, and explain why you view each as such.
- 2) His/her high school career has been pleasurable because.....
- 3) I am most proud of my child when he/she.....(provide specific anecdotes, if possible)
- 4) Here is a description of things a college should know about my son/daughter, especially unique characteristics or experiences:
- 5) Are there any family-related factors that will influence your child's decision about where to go to college? Include information about legacy, geography, family in the area, etc.
- 6) Is there anything else you believe would be good for me to know about your son/daughter?