

# AVID Senior Seminar Course Outline

**Department:** English & Social Science

**Grades:** 11 & 12

**Prerequisite:** Previous enrollment in AVID elective class prior to grade 11 for at least one year.

**Corequisite:** Enrollment in at least one Honors, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate course or in a college-transferable course in both the 11th and 12th grade years.

## Context for the Course

AVID elective courses at all grade levels are designed to prepare students for entrance into four-year colleges and universities. The courses emphasize rhetorical reading, analytical writing, collaborative discussion strategies, tutorial inquiry study groups, preparation for college entrance and placement exams, college study skills and test taking strategies, note taking and research. AVID students, generally, come from groups underrepresented at our four-year colleges and universities. They are enrolled in a rigorous academic program while being given a support system in the AVID classes through tutorials, coaching in note taking, organization and study skills, analytical writing, collaborative work and college counseling. All AVID seniors are required to develop and present a portfolio representing their years of work in the AVID program as well as complete the requirements for the Seminar course.

## Course Description

The AVID Senior Seminar is a two-year interdisciplinary course for AVID juniors and seniors. The course is designed for those students who elect to take a course that prepares them for the rigor required for college work. Students will engage in higher levels of WIC-R (writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading) strategies than experienced in prior years of AVID. These higher level thinking, reading, writing and oral language skills are needed to prepare students for the level of work required to produce a culminating research project at the end of the senior year.

This course is organized around the theme of “Leadership as a Catalyst for Change in Society.” Students study, in depth, exceptional leaders in contemporary society, and examine the effect these individuals have had on culture, politics, education, history, science, and the arts. The course requires that students read essays, speeches, articles and letters by these leaders, as well as at least one full-length work by the leader or about the leader. In addition, each student is required to conduct a research project that is presented in the senior year. The project requires that students examine a particular leader’s life and accomplishments in relation to the student’s own possible career goals and aspirations. Among the leaders included in the course for in-depth study include: Leonard Bernstein, Dr. Jane Goodall, Dr. Stephen J. Gould, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Pablo Neruda, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr David Suzuki and John Wooden. Students may select other leaders of equal stature with the approval of the AVID teacher.

The focus of the junior year is the survey of 8–10 recognized leaders from a variety of fields of study. Individually and in study teams, students will explore the historical period in which the leader lived, the social issues they addressed, and their contributions to society. Students will be expected to read and write extensively throughout the process, including participation in a variety of collaborative discussion and response groups. This

preliminary research survey will culminate in an end-of-year essay in which students explain and provide evidence for choosing a particular leader to study in greater depth.

The level of reading, writing, inquiry, discussion and analysis experienced in the junior year will serve as the foundation for in depth research to be introduced and completed as a final project in the senior year.

In the senior year, students will select a leader to study in depth, read extensively about the leader, write a number of analytical essays, develop critical questions based on their reading and writings, participate in collaborative discussion groups such as Socratic Seminar, and complete a final research essay project.

In addition to the academic focus of the AVID Senior Seminar, there are college bound activities, methodologies and tasks that should be achieved during the junior and senior year. Support materials are in development and will be divided into four semesters surrounding the topics of Testing, Preparation, Exploration and Fit and Finances. For an overview and timeline related to each semester for both the junior and senior years, and for directions for reviewing and downloading pilot materials, see Appendix A.

## **Course Content**

### ***Goals***

1. Students will learn to analyze the features and rhetorical devices used in different types of non-fiction: essays, speeches, editorials, scientific reports and historical documents.
2. Students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of significant ideas expressed in a variety of written works by identifying important ideas, recognizing inferences and drawing conclusions.
3. Students will develop various strategies to respond to a text including, annotating a text, writing learning logs, and developing double entry journals and summaries.
4. Students will develop their ability to relate prior knowledge to new information and make connections to related topics of information.
5. Students will demonstrate an ability to articulate a clear thesis on a topic, and identify, evaluate and use evidence to support their thesis.
6. Students will develop their ability to write well-organized essays that are consistently coherent and logically developed.
7. Students will continue to learn to effectively summarize ideas contained in a text.
8. Students will develop skill in writing short answer response essays, including, timed essays.
9. Students will participate in research projects that extend their knowledge of a particular topic and develop and support their own ideas and opinions.
10. Students will participate in discussions, presenting their ideas in a clear and articulate manner.
11. Students will listen to and respond to the ideas of others.
12. Students will develop a leadership role in Socratic Seminars.
13. Student will develop their skills in research techniques.

14. Students will productively participate in both individual and group projects and discussions.
15. Students will improve their oral communication skills through a variety of means, including presentation, debate, and Socratic Seminar.
16. Students will learn to evaluate their own and others' writing, using rubrics and scoring guides modeled on UC and CSU entrance exams.
17. Students will learn specific strategies to navigate the college admission process by engaging in a variety of activities and tasks.

## **Course Outline**

### ***Junior Year***

#### **I. Course Introduction**

- A. Introduce the theme of "Leadership as a Catalyst for Change in Society."
  1. Examine students' perceptions about what constitutes a leader, including the qualities that characterize a leader. Using a variety of readings and collaborative group strategies, students analyze and discuss how "leadership" is defined and what roles leaders play in our society.
  2. Discuss the role of students as leaders in their school and community
- B. Following the discussion and exploration of the course theme, have students write a short essay in which each student analyzes, from his/her point of view, what is meant by "leadership as a catalyst for change in society."
  1. Revisit this essay as the semester progresses so students can modify, reexamine and redefine their original definition.
  2. As students study different leaders, have them develop graphic organizers, which outline the characteristics of a leader.
- C. Utilizing a "philosophical chair" or other collaborative group discussion formats, ask students to analyze, discuss, and debate the following question, "Does history make a leader, or does a leader make history?"

#### **II. Organization of Study**

- A. Develop a process and criteria to assign students to "study" team groups.
- B. Each group will be assigned a specific leader to study in-depth.
  1. Each study team will spend (4) weeks reading, analyzing, raising questions, discussing findings and exploring the life and role of the selected "leader."
  2. At the end of the 4 weeks, students, as a group, will rotate to another leader to study.
- C. As a group, students will discuss and examine the historical, social and cultural period in which the leader lived and worked.
  1. They will create a historical timeline.

2. They will create a graphic organizer, a T Chart, in which they outline the characteristics of that period and juxtapose them to the response of their leader to those characteristics.

#### D. Reading—Critical analysis Assignments

1. Students will be required to read one major work about the leader in each group.
2. Students will be required to read at least two essays by the leader.
3. Students will read at least three essays written about the leader by other authors.
4. Students will read at least two sources that specifically discuss the historical, social, cultural and scientific issues of that period, thereby placing the leader in historical context.
5. Throughout the time in each study team, students will engage in a variety of writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading (WIC-R) activities.

#### E. Writing Assignments

1. Students will be required to do the following on an ongoing basis: Take Cornell notes, write summaries, develop dialectical journals, and write at least two critical essays. In the essays students will analyze various historical, social, cultural issues.
2. Students will write an analytical essay of no less than three pages in which they examine, in detail, the major trends, conflicts and issues of the historical period in which the leader lived and worked.
3. Students will participate in individual and collaborative reader response groups to reflect and provide feedback for revisions.
4. Students will use a writing rubric designed specifically for the type of essay assigned and will be expected to score at least a 4 on a 6-point rubric.

#### F. Discussion and Oral Presentations

1. Students will be involved in ongoing discussions in each group based on questions the students generate from their readings.
2. Students will participate in Socratic Seminars on themes that link the various leaders they have studied. The students will use the texts they have read to support different points of view.
3. Students will prepare oral presentations for each group outlining and discussing the major issues and questions that evolved about the leader they studied.

### **III. Final Paper**

- A. At the end of the spring semester each student will select a leader he/she wants to study in depth in the senior year.
- B. The student will write a paper in which he/she explains why they have chosen a particular leader based on their readings and discussion. Student will also address the questions that were developed in the groups and select particular questions for in depth exploration.

## *Senior Year*

### **I. The senior year will begin with a review of what was studied in the junior year.**

- A. Review, examine and discuss (in historical context) the contributions made by the leaders in the course of study.
- B. Discuss what has made their contributions significant on both a personal and universal level.
- C. Explore and develop possible research questions, topics and themes as a result of the discussion.
- D. All discussions should be continually linked back to the theme of the course “Leadership as a Catalyst for Change in Society.”

### **II. Research Project**

- A. Students will review/revise the paper in which they explain and defend their choice of leader for research.
- B. Students prepare a preliminary research question.
- C. Students develop a plan and timeline for their project with input from their academic advisor. The plan must also include a reading schedule.

### **III. Reading Assignments**

- A. Students will read at least two long works (books) by their leader.
- B. Students will read at least four essays, including speeches, by their leader.
- C. Students will read at least four other sources—articles, books, essays, etc.—written about their leader.
- D. Students must read four sources about the historical period in which their leader lived (lives) and worked.

### **IV. Writing Assignments**

- A. On an ongoing basis students will take Cornell notes, keep a dialectical journal, and write summaries, short essays and develop graphic organizers.
- B. Every four weeks students will be required to write a well-developed critical essay in which they discuss their findings and the significance of these findings to their overall question.
- C. Students will generate higher level thinking questions that evolve from their research. These questions will help to propel their research forward.

### **V. Outside Sources**

- A. Students will collect information from individual contacts who are in the same field of study as the leader being researched.
- B. Students will form a mentorship with a scholar who has a special interest in the field of the leader being studied. This mentor will act as an advisor to the students’ project.

### **VI. Research Group**

- A. Students will form research groups/teams based on the leader they are researching.

- B. The team will be a forum in which to exchange ideas, generate questions for discussion, and develop possible themes and topics.
- C. The team will also be a forum to discuss and clarify issues regarding the historical context in which the leader worked.
- D. The team will also act as a peer editing group

## **VII. Socratic Seminars**

- A. The Socratic Seminar should be an ongoing activity that helps the students see their leader in a global context.
- B. The Socratic seminar should explore some of the following topics:
  1. How does a leader affect society and how does society affect the leader?
  2. What are the pros and cons of the changes that have taken place because of a leader's work?
  3. What are the individual characteristics of a leader and are their commonalities amongst leaders?
  4. What makes a leader a catalyst for change? What would such leadership look like in a school, business, community, and nation?

## **VIII. Review Research Plan and Timeline**

- A. By the end of the first semester the students should submit their preliminary notes.
- B. The students should finalize the thesis for their project.
- C. Students should revise their timeline.

## **IX. Oral Presentations from Each Team**

- A. Each team will present a consensus about their findings.
- B. Each team will discuss the research questions of their individual members.
- C. Each team will present and defend the topics for each individual project.

## **X. Writing the Research Paper**

- A. Students will use MLA Style form, bibliography, etc. for their project essay.
- B. Students will submit a schedule for submitting drafts of their project to their team and teacher.
- C. Students will state the thesis of their project.
- D. Students will present a preliminary bibliography.
- E. Students will present an outline of their research paper.
- F. Students will present drafts and revisions of their research paper in a timely fashion.

## **XI. Submission of the Final Research Project**

- A. Students utilize the writing-research process in submitting their final paper.

- B. Students follow all established and recorded timelines.
- C. Students conference with their teacher and academic mentor about the results of their research.

## **XII. Individual Reflections—Essay**

- A. Conclusions drawn from the research.
- B. The relationship of the leaders studied—his/her contributions, characteristics, accomplishments, education, goals—and the goals and aspirations of the AVID student.

*NOTE:* Support activities for writing assignments may be referenced in the revised (2005) *AVID High School Writing Teacher Guide*, especially those sections for advanced writing—argumentation, persuasion, exposition, and critical analysis.

## **Key Assignments And Activities**

- Reciprocal Teaching
- Literature Circles for Non-fiction
- Annotating the text
- Working with graphic organizers
- Quickwrites and freewrites
- Learning logs
- Double-entry journals
- Summary writing
- Analytical essays—short and long
- Timed essays—45 minute limit
- Preparing a bibliography
- Research project
- Discussion activities
- Group discussions
- Philosophical chairs
- Socratic seminars
- Oral reports

## **Instructional Methods And Strategies**

- Lecture
- Collaborative group work
- Readings
- Library and Internet research
- Seminars

- Collaboration with Advisors

## **Assessment Methods And Tools**

- Papers, essays, writing and oral language rubrics
- Journals
- Learning logs
- Exams, quizzes
- Participation
- Observation
- Conferencing
- Final project
- Reflection

AVID students will also be assessed on rudimentary AVID “basics” such as a well-organized notebook, participation in tutorials, notetaking and participation and leadership in Socratic seminars



# Resources

Bean, John C., Chappell, Virginia A., and Gillam, Alice M. *Reading Rhetorically: Brief Edition*

Hacker, Diana, *A Writer's Reference*

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

Zinsser, William, *On Writing Well*

Trimmer, Joseph and Hairston, Maxine, *The Riverside Reader*

Bloom, Lynn Z. and White, Edward M., *Inquiry: A Cross-Curricular Reader*

Goodall, Jane, *Reason for Hope*

Goodall, Jane, *Through the Window: My Thirty Years with Chimpanzees of Gombe*

Goodall, Jane, *In the Shadow of Man*

Goodall, Jane, *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior*

Goodall, Jane, *Africa in My Blood: An Autobiography in Letters—The Early Years*

Goodall, Jane, *Beyond Innocence: An Autobiography in Letters—The Later Years*

Gould, Stephen J., *Ever Since Darwin*

Gould, Stephen J., *The Flamingo's Smile*

Gould, Stephen J., *Bully for Brontosaurus*

Gould, Stephen J., *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes*

Gould, Stephen J., *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life*

Roosevelt, Eleanor, *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt*

Roosevelt, Eleanor, *My Day - Collection of Eleanor Roosevelt's Newspaper Column*

Roosevelt, Eleanor, *On My Own: The Years Since the White House*

Roosevelt, Eleanor, *It Seems to Me: Selected letters of Eleanor Roosevelt*

Lash, Joseph, *Eleanor and Franklin*

Lash, Joseph, *Eleanor: the Years Alone*

Lash, Joseph, *Love, Eleanor: Eleanor Roosevelt and Her Friends*

Gurewitsch, Edna P., *Kindred Souls: The Friendship of Eleanor Roosevelt and David Gurewitsch*

Suzuki, David, *The Scared Balance*

Levine, Joseph and Suzuki, David, *The Secret of Life*

King, Martin, Luther, Dr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community*

King, Martin, Luther, Dr., *Why We Can't Wait*

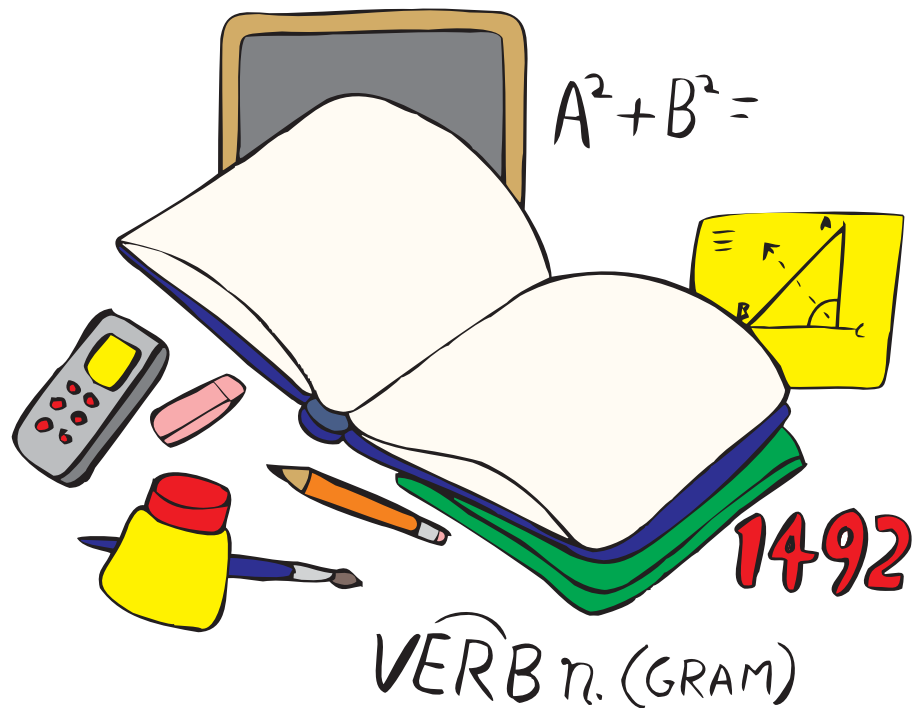
King, Martin, Luther, Dr., *Stride Toward Freedom*

King, Martin, Luther, Dr., *The Collected Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Wooden, John, *They Call Me Coach*

Wooden, John, *My Personal Best: Life Lessons from an All-American Journey*

Wooden, John, *WOODEN: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court*



# Appendix A

**NOTE:** After June 1, 2005, you can review/download a course description and resources including a pilot Teacher Guide that includes a number of college preparation/exploration activities by going to [www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org), log into MyAVID Account, then go to File Sharing and click on Jr./Sr. Seminar Resources. Overviews of each of the units from the pilot teacher guide are described below.

## Unit 1

### *Overview*

It is during the first semester of the junior year that students learn about the two college admission tests (ACT and SAT) and the differences between them. One way for students to become familiar with these materials is to take both practice tests (the PLAN and the PSAT) and use the results to prepare for ACT and SAT testing in the spring.

Students also begin to prepare for college admission by gathering materials and organizing them into “crates” and by reviewing what they have accomplished in their first two years of high school. This will prepare them for writing a résumé, a good resource when completing college applications. This is also a time to look at college entrance requirements and to access a valuable research tool: the Internet.

AVID students may want to consider applying to both public and private schools. One way to explore the various elements of the college admission process is to visit a variety of Web sites. For example, at the California Colleges site ([www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu)), students can find answers to their questions about entrance requirements, financial aid, career planning, and much more. College admissions representatives who come to the school can provide additional information.

Financing their college education is a concern for many students. In this semester, some key concepts are introduced, but little can be done in this area until the senior year. Students can also begin self-exploration to help them determine which college(s) will be a good “fit” for them.

### *Timeline*

#### **1. Testing**

September: Review previous PLAN and PSAT scores.

September–October: Prepare for PSAT test. Take PSAT test.

December: Interpretation of score results (counselor presentation).

#### **2. Preparation**

September: Prepare student “crates.”

September–October: Do preparation activities.

October–January: Data sheets, “a–g” requirements, résumé, “Family Firsts.”

#### **3. Exploration**

September–November: Presentations by college representatives.

October–December: College exploration on the Web (UC Pathway, California Colleges, CSU Mentor sites).

January: AVID graduate panel.

#### **4. “Fit” and Finances**

September–June: Explore types and varieties of financial aid.

December–June: Financial aid calendar; ongoing review.

## Unit 2

### *Overview*

During the second semester of the junior year, students are encouraged to take both college admissions tests. They can then prepare for retaking their highest scored test in the fall semester of their senior year. This is also the time to explain strategies that will help students when they take SAT Subject tests. Since many students will also be taking AP tests for the first time, these can be coordinated with the SAT Subject tests.

Students can prepare for the college application process by beginning a first draft of their college essay and also by considering whom they will ask to write letters of recommendation. The “GPA Game” demonstrates what counts most when college admissions officers decide which applications to accept. It’s a valuable tool for both students and parents.

Students will also need to determine priorities for their higher education so they can focus on researching colleges that “fit” these priorities. Once a list of colleges is created, students will want to consider visiting these campuses before the first semester of their senior year. Finally, students need to plan a productive summer to ensure they are prepared for the application process in the fall.

This is also the time to research the costs involved in attending college and to determine how to pay these costs. (It’s important to include parents in this discussion.) Students can begin the search for financial aid by applying for a PIN. Visiting college fairs in the spring to check for “fit” and continuing the search for scholarships are also a part of the second semester of junior year.

### *Timeline*

#### **1. Testing**

January–June: Register for March through June admission tests, including ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject tests. (SAT Subject tests are needed for UC or highly selective schools.)

March–June: Take SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject tests.

May: Take appropriate AP tests.

#### **2. Preparation**

February: Review first-semester grades and compute “a–g” GPA.

February–June: Update data sheets and résumé.

March–June: UC essay prompts and Common Applications should be started and refined.

May–June: Letter of recommendation procedures and teacher/counselor selection.

#### **3. Exploration**

February: College selection and priorities activities.

March–June: College/major research, using a variety of resources including Web sites, printed materials, speakers, and visits.

March–June: Create potential college lists. Use comparison worksheets. Finalize summer plans.

#### **4. “Fit” and Finances**

February: Register for FAFSA PIN.

February–June: Continue searches and applications on FASTWEB.

March: Use family financial aid predictor Web sites ([www.act.org](http://www.act.org) or [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)).

March–April: Visit College fairs.

## **Unit 3**

### ***Overview***

The first semester of the senior year is a critical time for the college-bound student for this is when all the elements of college admission come together and the application is completed and submitted. Students will have one final chance in the early fall of their senior year to retake college admission tests (ACT, SAT, and/or SAT subject tests). Test results should then be sent to all schools to which students intend to apply.

Students will need to finalize their choice(s) of colleges, and, ideally, visit college campuses. (If visiting is not possible, they should plan to meet with college representatives.) This is the time for computing the final “a–g” GPA (from grades 10–11) and requesting letters of recommendation. College admission essays will need to be finalized, résumés updated, and materials gathered for college applications.

The preferred method for completing and submitting a college application is online, although students may want to prepare for this by using a paper application as a worksheet. All required materials should be gathered together, and, if possible, taken to the school’s computer lab. The application deadline for most California public colleges and universities is November 30, so AVID students should plan to submit their application prior to Thanksgiving. Private college applications are usually due in December or January. Fee waivers are available.

This is also the time for financial aid arrangements to be made, beginning with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form, which is key to nearly all types of financial assistance, should be submitted as soon as possible after January 1 (the earliest date for submission). In some cases, the CSS PROFILE form will be required as well. Application materials are available, at no cost, to teachers, students, and parents to assist them in learning about this process.

### ***Timeline***

#### **1. Testing**

August–December: Register for ACT, SAT, and/or SAT Subject tests, as appropriate. Send scores to colleges of interest. File test results in the testing folder in the student’s “crate.”

#### **2. Preparation**

September: Update résumés and compute the final “a–g” GPA to be submitted with applications.

September–October: Complete college research; review guidelines for applying to college online; visit colleges of interest; request applications.

October: Ask selected teachers/counselors/others to write letters of recommendation and provide each with a packet of information. Revise essays and finalize for submission.

#### **3. Exploration**

October–November: Submit public college applications online (with final draft essays).

November–December: Submit private college and university applications (with final draft essays). Schedule interviews.

#### **4. “Fit” and Finances**

September–January: Continue to apply for scholarships.

October: Verify FAFSA PIN and register for PROFILE, if needed.

October–January: Attend financial aid events.

December–January: Submit Cal Grant GPA verification.

January: Complete FAFSA application worksheet.

### **Unit 4**

#### ***Overview***

If students are applying to private colleges or schools outside of California, they may still have time to take college admission tests (ACT or SAT) in January. Once students have been accepted, there may be additional enrollment requirements. For example, CSUs require that students show proficiency in writing and math, and some students may have to take placement tests for these subjects. UC schools require that students meet an entry-level writing requirement. Advanced Placement students will also be taking AP subject tests in May.

As students begin receiving acceptance letters, they should prepare “College Comparison Grids.” Celebrate acceptances by creating a “Hurrah Board” that honors the student and university. Sending thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who have helped with the admission process is highly recommended. It is also time to begin preparing students for the transition from high school to college.

Invite AVID graduates to visit the class and share their college experiences. Encourage students to visit the schools to which they have been accepted and to attend freshman orientation or “Accepted Students” events. Once they have decided where they will attend, students must notify the school and send in any required deposits by May 1. They should also notify other colleges that have accepted them that they will not be attending there.

Filing for FAFSA as early as possible (after January 1, but before the March 2 deadline) is the financial priority for this semester. Applying online is the preferred method. The process is complex, but there are many resources to help students and their parents. As graduation nears and students prepare for the transition to college, academic, personal, and social success in college are important topics to discuss with class.

#### ***Timeline***

##### **1. Testing**

January–February: Make sure all test scores have been submitted to colleges, especially if tests were taken in January for admission to private or out-of-state colleges.

February–April: For students applying to a CSU: If not exempt, register for and take the ELM and/or EPT.

April–May: For students applying to a UC campus: If not exempt, register for and take the Entry Level Writing Requirement Exam.

May: Take Advanced Placement (AP) Tests; be sure to indicate to which college the scores should be sent.

##### **2. Preparation**

February–April: Complete comparison grids for colleges from which acceptance letters have been received.  
Post acceptances on the “Hurrah Board.”

February–March: Submit mid-year transcripts, if requested.

April–May: Begin transition activities (from high school to college).

June: Write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who helped during the application process.

### **3. Exploration**

February to Mid-April: Visit/Revisit campuses (where students have been accepted), if needed. Attend “Accepted Students” events.

Mid-April: MAKE A DECISION; inform college and send deposit. Notify other colleges.

June: Request that a final transcript be sent to ONE college

### **4. “Fit” and Finances**

January–February: Submit FAFSA and GPA verification forms (if the school does not submit electronically).

January–June: Continue to apply for scholarships.

January–June: MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING

January–February: Make sure financial forms for all colleges are completed.

February–April: Carefully review and file in “crate” all financial aid offers; complete financial aid comparison sheets.

March: If necessary, appeal financial aid award of first choice college. This must be done in writing with additional information.

Mid-April: MAKE A DECISION; sign all appropriate documents for the college of choice. Send in tax forms as soon as prepared.