

## Postings

From The New Trier Post-High School Counseling Office  
For Members of the 2020 Graduating Class and their Parents

January/February, 2019

Now that first-semester exams are over, we look forward to senior course registration, and thought some pointers or tips might be in order. Additionally, the white, post-high school binder has a wealth of general guidance in section two.

**The goal is to have each student** enrolled in individual courses and an overall program that are manageable and educationally appropriate. Academic teachers make recommendations for senior-year courses based on the student's performance in that class, which includes considering the student's dedication to thorough homework completion as well as his or her classroom exams, projects, and in-class attentiveness. The student's adviser has a better understanding of the student's overall daily obligations, and looks at the proposed schedule from the perspective of the classroom demands alongside the student's extracurricular involvement. Any special education program coordinator makes sure that courses are appropriately challenging and keeps options open. The post-high school counselor reviews the schedule during the initial post-high school meeting to make sure that the student remains competitive for college admission. The adviser, special education coordinator, and post-high school counselor all check to ensure that graduation requirements are met.

**When building a senior year schedule,** make sure that each student makes selections of interest and demonstrates to admission officers that the student continues to make the most of the educational opportunities New Trier offers. In other words:

Students should be in four to five of the traditional academic courses (English, math, social studies, science, modern and classical language) during the senior year, no matter how many overall years of these courses the student has already completed.

College admission officers want to know that each candidate is serious about preparing for success at the college level, so making sure that the senior year remains intellectually challenging (but not overwhelming) is vital. At New Trier we basically expect students to continue their studies as they have done the previous years.

Students interested in highly selective colleges need to remain particularly diligent about not only senior year course selection, but also their achievement in the courses chosen.

Exceptions exist for those students whose goals may be, for instance, a conservatory setting in the fine arts.

Even students who are recruited for athletics in college should build a solid senior program in order to help the coach in his or her efforts to get the candidate admitted. In most cases, a coach has to run a prospective student-athlete's academic transcript past the admission office in order

for the candidate to be admitted. It's usually not just up to the coach, so create a schedule that shows you are serious about your intellectual as well as your athletic prowess!

**Enrolling in AP, or Advanced Placement courses, does not guarantee admission.** The Advanced Placement program courses are trademarked classes that include college-level content and are taught and assessed in ways mandated by the company that created them. The majority of New Trier college applicants do not take any AP courses during their time in high school. It is more important to consider whether or not such a course is educationally appropriate for the student than just to have the class on the senior schedule. In fact, a *Chicago Tribune* front-page article on January 5, 2016, indicated that while there is a slight benefit to sitting in the classroom itself, nearly forty percent of Illinois students who attempt to gain college-level credit through the AP program fail to do so.

So, take the class if you are prepared for the rigor and commitment and are recommended to do so by your teacher. And make sure that your overall academic obligations are not overwhelming. If your time is already stretched with your current academic and extra-curricular obligations, you might not have the time for such a class. Achievement in the courses selected is much more important than just having such a class on the schedule.

**A word about languages.** While you may have already completed three years of the same foreign language, the benefit of a fourth year is that many colleges will waive any college graduation requirement in language for students who have completed four years of the same language with grades of "C" or better in high school. In other words, having a fourth year in high school may mean you do not have to take language if it is required for college graduation. Colleges that do not automatically waive credit will provide a free placement/proficiency exam for students at summer orientation to either earn credit or become exempt from taking any required classes.

Math is typically considered essential for college admission; almost every college requires students to take math, or quantitative courses to graduate from college, so having a senior math course provides a seamless transition. Taking that year off might mean additional courses are necessary for college graduation.

Science courses are also considered important for the development of analytical thinking, and many colleges require three of the four traditional sciences – biology, chemistry, geoscience and/or physics. This is particularly important if a student intends to study pre-medicine, pre-pharmacy, physical therapy, or engineering. New Trier offers a wide array of fun yet challenging science courses such as forensic science and sports medicine that should only be considered after three of the traditional science courses have already been completed.

The physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being of each student is of primary importance, and during the fall semester of the senior year, students deal with the additional burden and stress of the college application process.

Daily advisers, special education coordinators, and post-high school counselors expect questions. The post-high school counselors are visiting each adviser room to discuss course selection, and are available every day through the end of registration for student drop-in's if students wish to have individual questions addressed.