



GET INTO COLLEGE

Useful Advice From



IECA⁺ Counselor's Corner



One of the best feelings is when you finally reach that last year of high school. For many seniors, your college applications have been submitted, or you are finishing up those last few. Reaching this point is exciting and it is so tempting to say to yourself, "I'm done. Now I can just coast for the rest of the year." That approach is not likely a good one!

It is common for some high school seniors to go into a slump and consequently perform at substandard levels during the last months of school. In fact there is even a name for it "senioritis." And, it is spreading at an alarming level. It attacks all levels of students; those who are high achievers, average students and even those who are struggling. You might even be experiencing some of the common symptoms:

- Desperately wishing for your senior year in high school to just be over
- Not being as engaged in your classes as you used to be
- Feeling that you've outgrown school activities
- Wanting to move onto something bigger and better
- Lack of focus
- Slumping grades

Sound familiar? If you've caught any of these symptoms you need to rethink your approach for this all-important school year even if your applications are in. Did you know that even applicants accepted through Early Decision or Early Action programs have their grades evaluated again? Your first quarter grades were submitted with your application but, your high school is required to send in a mid-year grade report and a final transcript at the end of the year. In fact, this applies to all students who've applied to any college whether through early programs or regular admissions. Admissions officers review those grades again and they look for those students whose marks have dropped precipitously.

It's true that colleges have the right to rescind acceptances if your grades fall beyond their acceptable standards. Believe it: colleges do follow through with this practice for some students, every year. If you let your guard down you may receive a bad-news letter that you did not expect. According to the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), "more than one-third of colleges reported they had revoked an offer of admission during the Fall 2007 admission cycle", as published in the latest edition of College Bound, November 2008.

If you think that you are suffering from "senioritis" do something about it - be constructive. For instance, if you have maxed out most of the curriculum because you've been a high achiever, find out if you can do an independent study in a subject not offered at your school, one for which you have a passion! You

could also do a meaningful internship outside of school at the end of your day, possibly in place of a course that is only a semester long. Internships are a good way for you to find out if you are interested in becoming a doctor, broadcast journalist, or video-game designer by experiencing it first-hand. Many high schools are now actively engaged in helping seniors find significant internships during their last semester in high school.

If you are a student whose academic skills are not where they should be but you are still heading off to college, take advantage of your senior year to shore up your skills. That way you can avoid being among the approximately 35 percent of all first year college students required to take remedial classes because they are not college ready. Did you know that students who are bogged down with remedial courses do not accrue college credits, but still pay college tuition? This is one of the factors contributing to why colleges now quote a six-year graduation rate.

Senior Slump? Don't allow yourself to coast, the price is too high. The cure is straightforward. Place your focus on keeping your grades up on assignments in general, making the most of your opportunities such as internships or job-shadowing, and by acing your mid-term and final exams.

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