

# PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE CENTER



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Dear Parents/Guardians of Seniors:

Now that most of the college applications have been submitted and the New Year approaches, **I want to remind you of the process for applying for financial aid as well as introduce resources for scholarship opportunities**—including Paly's Community Scholarship program.

## FINANCIAL AID

A reminder that January is the time to file the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** if a student wishes to be considered for financial aid from the government, colleges and universities, and several need-based scholarships. Every student and parent must each register for a personal identification number (PIN) at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) to use to complete the form: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students must have a Social Security Number. The filing period for the FAFSA begins on January 1, 2012. The FAFSA postmark deadline for CA public colleges and universities is March 2nd. Other colleges and universities may have earlier or priority deadlines; *it is important to check required forms and filing dates for specific colleges*. For help with a question about completing the FAFSA, call their help line at 1-800-4-FEDAID.

Following is a list of important documents needed to help complete the FAFSA:

- Driver's license
- Student's Social Security card or number
- Alien registration number, if the student is not a U.S. citizen
- Your student's 2011 income information
- The custodial parents' 2011 income information
- Your student's and the custodial parent's tax information; previous year tax info for now if you don't have a 2011 W-4.
- 2011 bank statements
- Any records of untaxed income such as welfare benefits, Social Security benefits, or child support payments
- List of colleges your student is interested in attending

In addition, remember that students who are applying for financial aid and for admission to California schools (public and private) must also have their GPA verified to be considered for the state's **Cal Grant** program. Eligibility for a Cal Grant is based on family income, family assets, and the student's unweighted state GPA (sophomore and junior year grades only [no PE, ROP, or MP classes]). Students who have demonstrated financial need and a 3.00 minimum GPA are entitled to a Cal Grant A; students with at least a 2.00 GPA are entitled to a Cal Grant B. Students attending a vocational school may qualify for a Cal Grant C. This link from the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) will help you determine whether you meet the 2011-2012 family income and asset ceilings: [http://www.csac.ca.gov/facts/2012\\_13\\_income\\_ceilings\\_new\\_applicants.pdf](http://www.csac.ca.gov/facts/2012_13_income_ceilings_new_applicants.pdf). Family assets (including savings and investments) are determined from information submitted on the FAFSA form (home equity is not included in the FAFSA asset calculation). *Paly will pilot CSAC's Non-SSN GPA File (Batch) Upload for all seniors; students do not need to complete a Cal Grant GPA Verification Form.*

As I indicated in my previous emails, **many out-of-state publics and private colleges require additional forms** in order to be considered for financial aid—and may require that these forms be filled out before the FAFSA is due! Some require that you complete the CSS/Financial Aid Profile from the College Board, in addition to the FAFSA. You can register for the CSS Profile application at [www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp](http://www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp). Other colleges require students to complete institutional forms instead of the CSS Profile. Consult individual college websites for relevant information and deadlines.

## **Upcoming Financial Aid Events:**

- The College and Career Center will host a **Financial Aid Workshop** on Thursday, January 5, 2012 from 7:00-8:30 pm in the English Resource Center in the library. This year, Karen Cooper, Director of Financial Aid at Stanford University will be our guest speaker. Basic familiarity with financial aid terminology (e.g. FAFSA, EFC, CalGrant) and the application process is assumed; the financial aid presentation at the College Fair was a good overview but for a refresher, take a look at: <http://www.paly.net/college/FinancialAid.php> to be prepared.
- The College of San Mateo is hosting two **California Cash for College workshops** January 14 (10:15 am and 12:15 pm in the CSM College Center – Building 10, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor) where you'll not only get help completing your FAFSA and other forms, but students can also enter a drawing for a \$1,000 scholarship. One scholarship is offered at each workshop held across the state! Logon to [www.californiacashforcollege.org](http://www.californiacashforcollege.org) for more information and to find other workshops in the bay area.

For more information about financial aid, see [www.paly.net/college/FinancialAid.php](http://www.paly.net/college/FinancialAid.php).

### SCHOLARSHIPS

The next step is for students to complete the **Paly Community Scholarship Application** (they will receive a email from me via Naviance coinciding with the December 8<sup>th</sup> Advisory about scholarships that includes a link to the application); it's also available online: <http://www.paly.net/college/PalyCommScholarApp11v3.docx>). The sponsors of various community scholarships ask Paly's Scholarship Committee to nominate and/or select students to receive awards. To be considered for these scholarships, **students must complete the Community Scholarship Application, print it out, and return it to me by February 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

In the past, these scholarships have been the most accessible and lucrative for our students. Last year over \$100,000 was awarded to Paly students who completed the Community Scholarship Application. Scholarship categories include: memorial awards, community service, working students, scholarships for a particular college major (e.g. biology, engineering, business, international relations), 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students, and under-represented minorities. All students are encouraged to submit an application since both need-based and non need-based scholarships are available.

**Students who want to be considered for need-based scholarships must provide family financial information on the back page of the application; in addition, these applicants are also required to submit a copy of the Student Aid Report (including the EFC) they receive after filing the FAFSA** along with their scholarship application (samples of acceptable EFC documentation are attached to my email to you). *This information is confidential.* As a guideline for qualification of need, we have typically considered families with incomes of less than \$125,000. Should your income exceed this amount, feel free to apply, but be sure to explain any special circumstances. *It is important to turn in documents on time; don't wait until you file your tax returns; complete the FAFSA using estimates; once you file your taxes, you can edit the FAFSA to amend data.*

The Paly Community Scholarship Application is often used as a screening application; in some cases students who are selected to move forward will need to complete additional application materials to be considered. Unless contacted by the scholarship sponsors, students are notified that they've won an award when they are invited to Paly's Senior Award Night program in June.

Remember that there are numerous other scholarship opportunities that students can pursue on their own:

- Paly's list  
Paly publishes opportunities sent to us; this Scholarship List is updated weekly in Naviance
  
- Colleges websites  
Financial aid/scholarship pages and department/major websites.
  
- Community resources  
Tap into your personal networks and search local business and civic organizations, cultural and religious organizations, your parents' employers, places where you've performed community service, worked or interned, and check resources in local libraries.
  
- Internet scholarship search engines:  
[FastWeb.com](http://FastWeb.com)  
[FinAid.org](http://FinAid.org)  
[MeritAid.com](http://MeritAid.com)  
[Moolahspot.com](http://Moolahspot.com)  
[Cappex.com](http://Cappex.com)  
[Latinocollegedollars.org](http://Latinocollegedollars.org)  
[CollegeBoard.com](http://CollegeBoard.com)  
[scholarshiphelp.org](http://scholarshiphelp.org)  
[scholarships.com](http://scholarships.com)  
[scholarships4students.com](http://scholarships4students.com)  
[Gocollege.com](http://Gocollege.com)

Sincerely,  
Sandra Cernobori

### References:

- Paly Community Scholarship Application: <http://www.paly.net/college/PalyCommScholarApp12v2.pdf> ; <http://www.paly.net/college/PalyCommScholarApp12v2.docx>
- Samples of Acceptable FAFSA EFC Documentation: <http://paly.net/college/EFC%20docs.pdf>