**Four Year Co-Curricular Plan**

**(Adapted from Donald Asher’s *The Best***

***Scholarships for the Best Students)***

**Freshman Year**

* Take wide variety of courses to try to find your major.
* Take a foreign language (whether it’s required or not).
* Find a sport you can enjoy every week for the rest of your life.
* Learn to see your faculty *outside* of the classroom by stopping by during their open office hours to discuss the class, curriculum, paper ideas, what’s going to be on the test, how best to study, who’s who in the department, etc.
* Realize that you can’t graduate in four years by taking a minimum load; familiarize yourself *now* with graduation requirements (distribution requirements, minimum credits, major and minor selection, departmental rules). You don’t want to become a senior who has to take required freshman-level courses!
* Get by without a car; your grades will be higher.
* Live on campus; your grades will be higher.
* *Avoid the credit card trap!* Use a debit card.
* Join at least one academic club.
* Join at least one activity to make the world a better place.
* Maybe join at least one activity solely to pursue an interest.
* Learn that college is not just classes, but also guest speakers, clubs, movies, outdoor recreation, political exploration, social opportunity, etc.
* Go the career center in the first semester and learn how to (1) register for announcements and notices, (2) write a resume, and (3) get an internship. Competitive internships are selected over the winter/early spring!
* Try to find friends who are going to be successful in life, and conversely, try to avoid those distracting, loud, irresponsible, and sometimes fun people who are ultimately going to fail at college.
* Find the help desk in the library, the writing center or academic support center, the counseling office, the medical clinic, and other sources of help and support.
* Try not to work long hours at a wage job, so you can adjust to college.
* Watch your grades!
* *If, and only if,* you are potentially interested in a career in medicine, find the pre-medical advisor and learn how best to prepare yourself.

**First Summer**

For most students, this is a “free” summer.

* Pursue a service opportunity or some kind of big adventure.
* Travel abroad.
* Take any kind of wage job.
* Work at an internship or summer job in an industry or field that you would potentially like to pursue after graduation.

For the most ambitious students:

* Seek an internship or a summer research opportunity. See your internship coordinator *in the first semester* to learn about internships. Talk to your faculty to learn about summer research opportunities that would be available to rising sophomores.

**Sophomore Year**

**Fall:**

* look into study abroad and internship programs for your second summer
* if a science major, consider applying for Goldwater scholarship
* consider a Gilman award for study abroad if you receive a Pell Grant
* if you plan to study a language vital to US national security interests consider the Critical Language Scholarship program. (Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Russian, Turkish and others).
* consider a Boren scholarship
* for some majors spring of the sophomore year is an ideal time to study abroad
* by now you should know your advisor or some professor in your major who functions as your mentor/advisor very well
* test your interest in one or more majors by deepening your class load in those subjects
* continue to see faculty outside of the classroom
* become involved in departmental activities, such as guest speakers, receptions, symposia, committee work open to students, and especially the informal events such as barbeques, softball Saturdays, whatever they’re doing
* go to career fairs and ask lots of questions

**Spring:**

* finalize study abroad and internship plans
* apply Achievement Fund for 2013 school year
* good times for on-campus jobs which are career related
* make a point of getting to know at least 2-3 professors in your major so they know you well enough to help you and to write informed recommendations for you

**Summer thereafter:**

* pursue an academic internship, career-related employment, summer institutes, study abroad or REU
* gather info listed during junior semesters if you will be studying abroad during junior year
* as a last resort, go to summer school to beef up your chances of graduating on time, or to prepare for graduate school

**Junior Year**

**Fall:**

* Senior year applications for Truman, Goldwater, Boren, Pickering, and Udall scholarships should begin this semester.
* Make preliminary arrangements for your undergraduate thesis or inquire about a senior research project in the sciences.
* Search for and apply for summer internships.
* Attend an academic conference in your field.
* Consider seeking a leadership role in one or more clubs or activities, especially if you are applying to graduate school
* Attend conferences and submit papers for publication.
* On-campus jobs should be career-related.
* Study abroad
* Begin to talk about your future careers with faculty, alumni, visiting speakers, VIP’s, parents of your friends
* Visit alumni and professionals in your chosen field for “shadowing” and informational interviews
* Research graduate schools. Look up prominent graduate faculty in your field of interest, read articles in the academic journals of your field, look at Peterson’s graduate school guides
* Begin to correspond with faculty in graduate schools of interest
* If headed for Law school, register in November to take the December LSAT (earliest).
* Visit all the graduate schools you can.

**Spring:**

* Finalize arrangements and begin work on undergraduate thesis
* Gather and begin work on applications for Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Mitchell, Gates-Cambridge and other scholarships
* Take one part of the GRE, begin prep for LSAT, MCAT or other exams
* Register in February for an April sitting if the GRE subject test is required by your graduate school to apply
* If headed for medical school, register in March to take the April MCAT. You can take it again in August if you don’t like your score.
* If you haven’t yet registered for LSAT, do so in January for the February sitting. You can take it again in June or October of the following year if you don’t like your score.
* Attend conferences and submit papers for publication
* On-campus jobs should be career-related
* S**tudy abroad**
* Education majors should inquire about student teaching abroad

**Senior Year**

**Fall:**

* **Applications!!!!** for all major post-grad scholarships, for grad and professional schools, for jobs
* Visit the career center during the first week of class to explore all the support available to you that will make this transitional year a success. At the very least, get that final resume polished and pursue interview training from the career center.
* Continue to prepare for scholarship and fellowship applications, generally due October through February. Keep in mind earlier campus deadlines that may be required for you to be nominated.
* Prepare in the first semester to get a career-launching job or post-graduation summer internship lined up. Plot out a year’s search activities with your career counselor.
* Meet with professors during the first week of class about your graduate school plans, seek their advice and identify potential authors of letters of recommendation.
* This is your last chance to retake exams if scores were low. Schedule and GRE subject tests if your still need to. If grad schools on your list require a subject GRE test, register in September or October for the November sitting.

**Spring:**

* Take synthesis course if not a student-teaching ed major
* Now is a good time to take required courses outside your major that you have been dreading or postponing.
* Follow up on applications for employment or graduate school
* Begin to systematically identify alumni who can give you career advice; learn how to conduct an effective informational interview
* Build a networking list of professionals in your targeted field who can help you find a job.
* No matter what your major, participate in the on-campus interview cycle if you’re interested in the industries that send recruiters to campus.

**Summer thereafter:** Varies widely.

* Grad students may want to start graduate programs **now** to complete the masters in time to apply for following PHD admissions cycle in March.
* This is also another opportunity to do a post-baccalaureate research experience (REU) or internship that you reference in your graduate application as a way of continuing your preparation for future graduate school.