



# COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

---

A year-by-year guide for  
high school families of what  
to do when on the  
collegebound journey.

FLOURISH COACHING



# RIGHT ORDER RIGHT TIME

Times have changed since you were in school. The stakes are high with increased competition to get into college & the cost of attendance is rapidly increasing.

If you have more questions than answers on planning what comes after high school graduation for your teen & you don't want them to miss opportunities, using a proven timeline for planning is important.

Our year-by-year tool goes from 9th grade through the summer after graduation & will help your family to plan ahead and beat (not meet) deadlines.

The collegebound journey can be overwhelming, but correct information will position your family for success and open the possibilities to a fulfilling future for your teen.

Print the guide & post it as a reminder.



# 9th Grade

## Get Involved

Extracurriculars are an important part of high school fun & will help you plan your future. High-level extracurriculars are an important part of college apps.



All Year

All Year



## Keep Grades Up

High school is harder & requires more study time. Your GPA is the most important piece of getting into college.

Focus on good study habits & ask for help when needed even if it means getting tutoring. There's nothing wrong with getting assistance. Practice makes progress!

## Choose 10th Grade Classes

Select classes that will challenge yet not overwhelm you. Focus on rigor in your areas of strength. Don't try to be superhuman.

Sketch out courses for 11th & 12th grade knowing your choices might change.



Winter

Winter - Spring



## Plan for Summer

This will be the freest summer you'll likely have in high school, but don't waste it away. Plan for a balance of fun and purpose. If you've not found a volunteer opportunity where you can be regularly involved & it aligns with who you are, now is a great time to do so.

Do an informal college tour to start exploring campuses.

# 10th Grade

## Level Up Your Extracurriculars

Stay involved & deepen your commitment to activities that align with you. It's not about how many you do, but meaningful experiences.

Look for leadership opportunities. You don't have to be the president to lead within your activity.



All Year

## Keep Grades Up & Plan for Course Rigor

As you move through high school, you'll have greater opportunities for electives & more rigorous courses. Challenge yourself. Colleges will vary in their expectations of what courses & how many credits. Choose courses that fit your academic strengths & goals.

All Year



## Make an ACT-SAT Testing Timeline

While it's not yet time to test, make a testing timeline now. Plan for 3 testing attempts that are complete by fall of 12th grade. Try to test in your less busy season.

ACT & SAT dates stay relatively the same from year to year.



2nd Semester



# 10th Grade

## Begin Career Planning

By August of 12th grade, you'll need to select a college major to which you'll apply. Some majors need to be selected at this time or you can't switch to them later.

Start the work now so you'll have time to know yourself, know careers, & make informed major decisions on which colleges to visit & apply to.

We recommend our [Launch Career Clarity course](#).



2nd Semester

2nd Semester



## Create a College Budget

College is typically a family investment of \$100,000 or more. For most families, it's one of the top 3 life investments along with owning a home & retirement.

Set a budget now before visiting colleges. It's almost impossible to create a college list that "fits" without a budget.

## Plan a Purposeful Summer

Keep learning & reading. Consider a job – it will teach you great skills, you'll earn extra money, & it's a great extracurricular.

Summer programs & internships applications are available during winter.



2nd Semester

2nd Semester



## Choose between ACT or SAT

That's right, all colleges accept ACT & SAT equally. Students should focus on their test of strength. Discover your teen's test of strength by taking ACT & SAT

Diagnostic Tests with your test prep provider of choice. PSAT scores can be substituted for a diagnostic SAT.

# 11th Grade

## Take the ACT or SAT

Algebra 2 is in the driver's seat when determining WHEN to test. Students who have completed algebra 2 by the end of 10th grade may want to test as early as the summer after 10th. Students taking algebra 2 in 11th grade will want to start no earlier than winter of 11th grade.

All students want to aim to finish all testing by fall of 12th grade ahead of college application deadlines which can be as early as October 15.



All Year

Fall



## Narrow College Majors of Interest

Think of college planning as:  
Career --> Major --> College

The end goal of the college investment is a career your student will thrive in & be prepared to launch into the world instead of back into your basement.

All tools available to college students for college major & career planning are available to high school students. Do the work now to make a wise choice of college later.

We recommend our [Launch Career Clarity course](#) in 11th grade if it's not completed in spring of 10th grade.



1st Semester

## Plan College Visit Dates

Get out the school calendar & your family calendar then reserve dates when students are off school, but college is in session, & plan to do college visits.

11th grade is a very busy time & academically challenging, so it's important to set aside the time to visit even if you don't yet know WHERE your teen wants to visit. It's completely normal to do visits throughout junior year & even in senior year.



# 11th Grade

## Continue Testing & Studying

Don't lose sight of your GPA during all your busyness. Study hard, do well on school & AP exams, and prepare for your ACT or SAT tests. We recommend a formal test prep program.

The GPA your teen will apply to college with is final at the end of 11th grade.



All Year

## Create a College List for Visits & GO!

Now that you have a budget & a shortlist of possible majors that fit future careers that align with your student, visit first virtually or get on campuses for visits – this is the fun part!

Consider other important aspects such as distance from home, geographical preferences, size, & campus vibe.

The process should be organic with the list changing as you experience colleges & learn what your teen likes.



All Year

## Plan for a Busy Summer

This will be your busiest summer yet! You should start college applications & essays as soon as school gets out to have a smooth start to 12th grade.

Consider other investments of time & strike a balance, so your teen is not overwhelmed. Choices include work, volunteering, summer programs, job shadows, & internships.



2nd Semester

## Continue College Major – Career Planning

Engage in career & major exploration through courses and other curated experiences including volunteering, job shadows, informational interviews, online research from trusted sources, and more.

At this point, we recommend our [Launch Career Clarity course](#) for those feeling unclear & have not previously taken the course.



2nd Semester

# 12th Grade

## Start Applications & Essays

Without a doubt, your teen will apply to at least one of the 900+ colleges that use the [Common App](#). The application can be started at any time, but will "roll over" to the current year on August 1st where the student's saved work will appear in the new application.

The personal statement (aka essay) prompts are released each spring. The essay is THE HARDEST part of the application process, so tackle it first without the distraction of school.

Colleges not using Common App may have their own or use the Coalition App. Check with each college.

Enlist assistance on essays and the process where needed. Ask early!

This will insure a smooth senior year & beating, not meeting, deadlines.



Summer

Summer



## College Major ID

Most will require your teen to apply to a specific major or school within the university. By August 1st, be prepared to select a major for each university applying to. This means continuing career planning activities over the summer.

There are some majors at some universities where student transfer into the major is greatly limited or impossible after the student applies. Know this before you apply & make wise choices.



# 12th Grade

## Finish ACT or SAT Testing

Test results can take 2 to 8 weeks to be delivered. Be sure all testing is scheduled to be completed with application deadlines in mind.



Summer to Early Fall

## Write College Supplemental Essays

Many colleges require additional essays to be admitted to their university, specific programs, awarded competitive scholarships, honors and scholars programs, and more.

First check inside the application, but also scour the school's admission site to be sure not to miss any requirements.

Most of these essay prompts are not available until after August 1.



Summer to Early Fall

## Attend Your HS 12th Grade Meeting

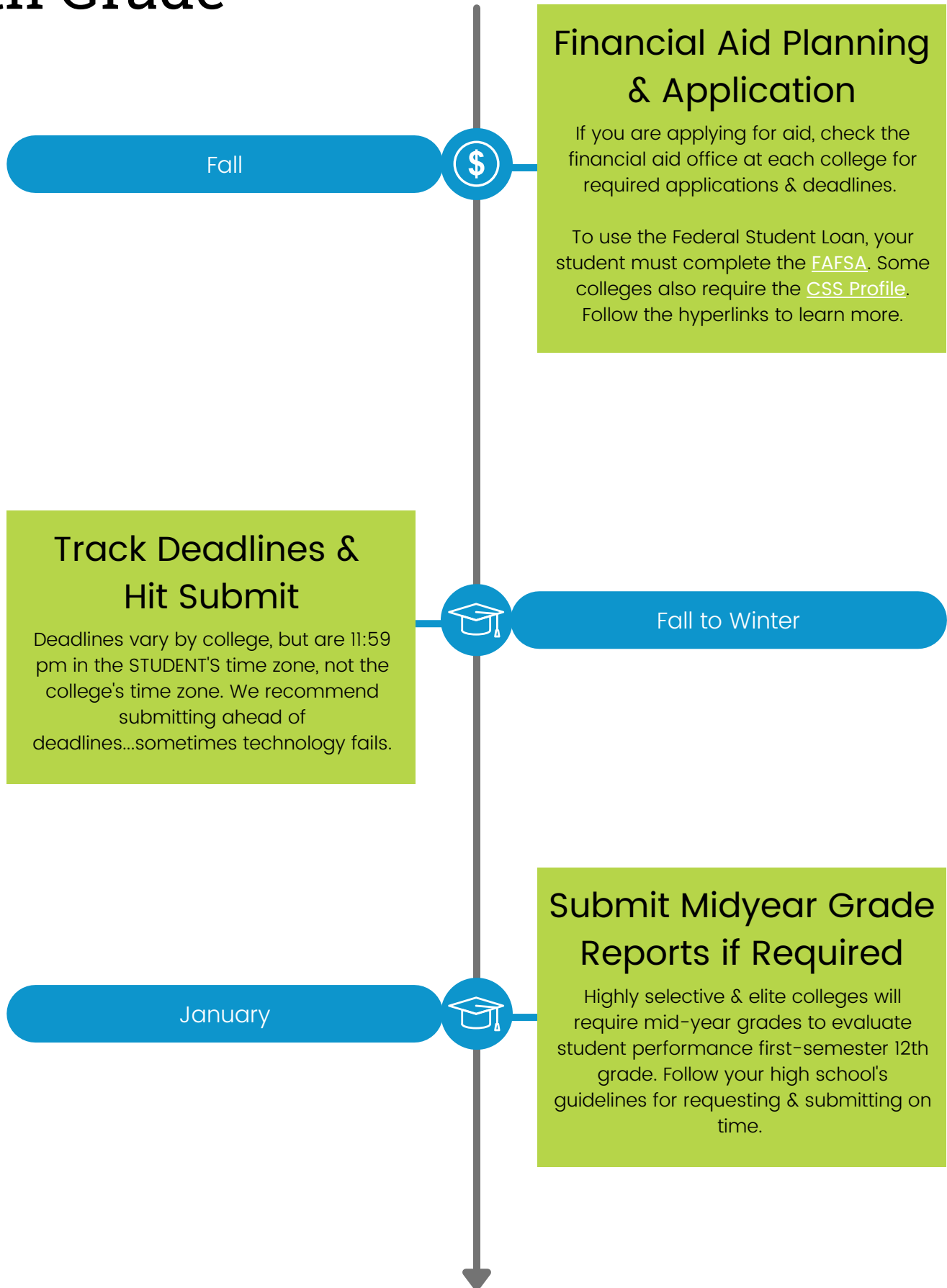
Your high school will hold a meeting to tell your family HOW your student should request transcripts and recommendation letters as well as their deadline for doing so to ensure they arrive by the college application deadline.

HOW this happens varies greatly by high school, so pay close attention & follow your school's guidelines and procedures.



Early Fall

# 12th Grade





# 12th Grade

## Weigh Your Options

As your decisions come in, weigh your offers. You might even find you need to do a second round of visits or get on campuses you didn't visit before applying. It is normal to do so.



2nd Semester

By May 1st



## Pay Your Deposit & Enroll

May 1st is National College Decision Day. The deadline to pay your deposit and officially enroll to secure your spot.

## Decline Other Schools

While it's not required, it's kind to decline your other offers. This frees up your spot & scholarship money for other students.



Spring

After Graduation



## Send Your Final Transcript

This is a required step for enrollment. Let your high school know where you'll attend, so they can send your final grades.

# Graduate!

## Say "Thank You"

Thank the many who helped you along the way with a handwritten note or even a small gift for the really special mentors in your life. This includes teachers, those who wrote recommendation letters, and more...don't forget your parents!



Spring

Summer



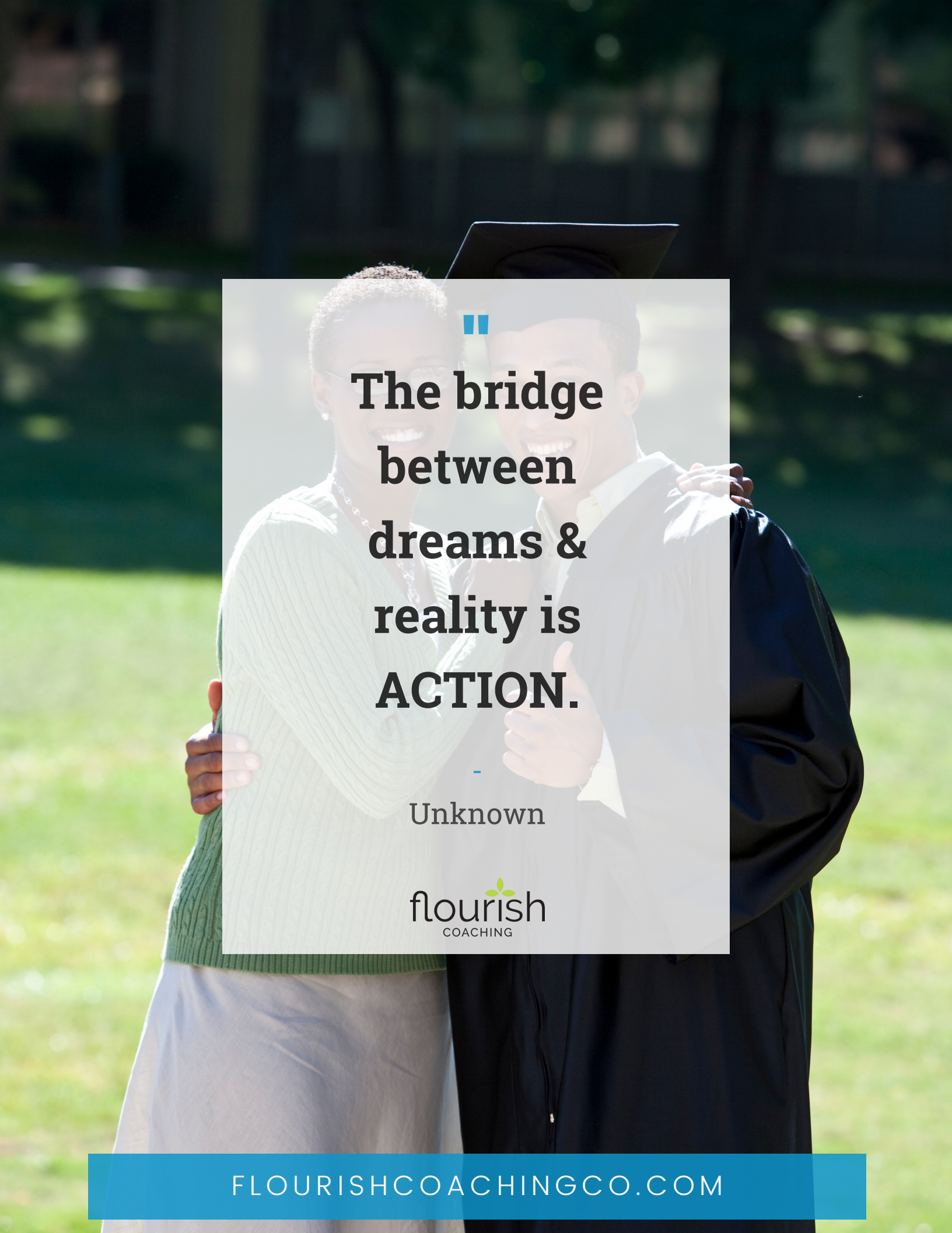
## College Orientation

This is your first official step on YOUR new home's campus. At orientation, you'll also select classes for the fall semester.

Flourish recommends you peruse your options before going to orientation. You may even meet your future roommate here.

*Congratulations!*





“  
**The bridge  
between  
dreams &  
reality is  
ACTION.**

—  
Unknown

flourish  
COACHING

FLOURISHCOACHINGCO.COM