

College Talk Assignment #3 – “Scholarships & THE LETTER”

For the final installment of College Talk “Scholarships and THE Letter” we will work on a hard copy. You will turn this assignment in for a final grade. The assignment is worth 100 points.

In Part III of College Talk we will roll up our sleeves and jump in. First of all we will take a look at the rising cost of Room and Board. Dorms and particularly the cost of meal plans on college campus’ have begun to hit student pocket books very hard. The cost has become so egregious it may make sense to live off campus ASAP. Then get to your college choice and do some cost comparisons. In the process you are going to call a few financial aid offices – and get some answers. Then we will take apart actual Award Letters from the OHS class of 2012. And finally we take a look at some interviews with past OHS students in an effort to lay some scholarship groundwork for your senior year.

Before we begin – let’s set a focus. They say that it’s healthy when beginning to layout your future plans to set your sights in at multiple directions - that will help you to plan for circumstances that you may or may not have any control over. Knowing that you only go to one school at a time – it’s important to point yourself in three directions. These choices would include Apprenticeships, the military, workplace choices, and may include two year and four year institutions.

- **Number one choose a REACH GOAL.** Choose a place that if all was right with the world – it would be **THE** place for you. Odds are that you may not get there – but you sure would like to. And who knows? The world is strange place – and your little sperm and your little egg landed in the first world? You never really know unless you try.
- **Number two choose a TARGET GOAL.** Realizing that even though situations may prevent you from attending, it is logical that you could get there. This is maybe the place that fits best with you.
- **Number three choose a FALL BACK GOAL.** It is important because so many times in life things don’t work out as planned. Too often if we are forced by issues out of our control to adjust, we see it as failure. That’s just not so, its reality. A Fall Back college choice is about facing reality. If you go after all three choices with equal intensity – and you could have a couple of targets – the odds are that you will be prepared for all possible scenarios.

In the end, three targets should help you successfully deal with whatever comes your way

AS OF TODAY!

My Reach Goal is: _____

My Target Goal is: _____

A Secondary Goal? _____

My Fall Back Goal is: _____

Part I - College Talk Podcast #10 - Decoding Financial Aid Letters

NPR investigates the challenges of specifically taking apart a financial aid award letter. Since that is what College Talk Assignment #3 is all about, the podcast fits perfectly with what we are doing. So, I want you to do Podcast #10 as an assignment. You may choose to do this at anytime within duration of larger assignment. Make sure it is posted into the google classroom linked [here](#). Copy the specific question prior to posting your answers. This posting counts fifty points separate from the full 100 point assignment.

Part II - NPR - Think Tuition is Rising Fast Try Room and Board

Go [here](#) to reach the above article. Without the inflation adjustment, room and board fees at public colleges have risen more than 20 percent since 2009. At private institutions, they're up 17 percent. This is a not-so-hidden, but misunderstood cost. If you know about it before you go, you can adjust your choices. So take a look.

1- Valerie's dilemma

Take a look at all of the financial challenges Valerie has from living in the dorms. What do you think about all of this?

2 - How and Why?

Why are universities raising the cost of room and board? How are Universities getting away with it.

3 - Purdue University and YOU

What steps has Purdue taken to cut costs? What could you do, particularly as a transfer student after two years at MCC or GRCC to cut room and board costs?

Part III - Award Letters - Working Copies

Let's take a look at some award letters from OHS class of 2012. By evaluating these letters you will at least get an idea of the cost involved at each school. Remember cost is only one variable involved in selecting a school; you have college prestige, program that you are going into, the value of going away to a four year school or a community college in a different town. All of these items play into your final decision and highlight the long term significance of that decision.

The process that got us to these letters is pretty basic and will repeat itself until you are 26 or substantial changes (marriage or homelessness or independence) enters into your life. Lets start by watching the brief but helpful cartoon from [Federal aid.gov](http://Federalaid.gov).

- 1 - COLLEGE APPLICATION** - Apply in the Fall - to reach, target, fall back goals
- 2 - FAFSA** - your parent's need to fill it out by March 1. Based on previous year's "family" tax return
- 3 - FAFSA** - if your folks are divorced - GO LOW. GO LOW. GO LOW!
- 4 - FAFSA** - determines your expected family contribution (even if they actually contribute zero).
- 5 - FAFSA** - you identify schools that you applied to above where you want FAFSA numbers sent to.
- 6 - SCHOOL** - calculates and mails you a Financial Aid package - complete with loans, grants, work study, and school scholarships that equals the residual after expected family contribution is calculated.
- 7 - ACCEPT or REJECT** - you may choose to reject the package or accept pieces of the package.
- 8 - FINAL RESULT** - if you accept only pieces of the package - you must cover the rest
- 9 - EXPECTATIONS** - for the next three years your award letter will probably be similar to your first.
- 10 - SCHOLARSHIPS** - every year you can and must supplement the final bill with scholarships

You'll notice in each of the letters below – that Fall and Winter semesters are identical in funding. So when we work on the letters we will work with one set of numbers only (knowing that it is a times two operation.) This is the manner in which you always get your financial award letter.

Remember the process repeats itself - (1 FAFSA) and (2 Award Letter) and (3 Acceptance or Rejection Decision) every year.

Linked below are Two Financial Aid Letters – one from University of Michigan and one from GVSU work with the three highlighted red letters for the first part of this assignment. The other two are available for later questions and for you to evaluate.

Now that you know what is in them...take these financial aid letters apart. Print each of the letters and worksheets out...and write all over them. You will turn in the worksheet copy with this assignment - staple each to the end of the assignment.

I would like you in the blank provided tell me everything that you know about the particular form of financial aid being offered. Pluses minuses everything. Then at the end of the line give that portion of the award letter a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) based on its value to you as a student. Evaluate the best and worst part of the package, total up the coverage, use the linked loan calculator and make estimates. Remember private scholarships are not a portion of this package and can affect your final decision on where to go.

And finally, one year multiplied out four times, will not be a fully accurate evaluation of your final costs. You may get done in three or five years, you may find new funding sources, or lose scholarships and grants. What we are trying to do here is estimate. So, have at it.

1 – University of Michigan - [worksheet / financial aid letter](#)

2 - Grand Valley State University - [worksheet / financial aid letter](#)

Part IV – Phone Calls

Fear is one of the biggest roadblocks when it comes to preparing for school. The sooner you get over it and get to know the financial aid office and the people who populate it...the better for you. So start calling financial aid offices NOW.

Please do not tell the folks on the other end of the phone that this is a school assignment. They will not take your call as seriously, and you may not get appropriate information.

Every time you call – log the information in on your computer. Date it – and summarize your notes and provide the name of the individual who you spoke with. That way you will have a running information sheet and you can ask for the same person the next time. Hopefully you will develop a relationship with that person over the course of your stay. In the end these folks in the financial aid are your lifeline. Make sure to note dates and times and deadlines.

For this section I want you to call your Target or Reach School – go to financial aid office and ask some questions. Also, ask for the Department where you set up tours. Call that department. Get some information on those tours. Finally and for extra credit you can call the Academic Department that you are most interested in and talk to them about their programs ... Use this assignment to set up tours!

I've provided questions to guide you through the conversation, however feel absolutely free to run off script and ask your own. Write everything down - for this assignment and in real life. As I said, you want to find a financial aid officer who you click with. Then go back over and over and over again throughout your stay to that particular individual.

The more you get used to being in contact with the institution, the better the opportunities that will head your way.

So...let's begin...

College or University: _____

General Phone Number: _____

Financial Aid Phone Number: _____

Department Phone Number: _____

Questions and Notes on Financial Aid:

Name of Financial Aid Officer _____

What are some Grants available for incoming freshman? Do these grants have GPA requirements attached to them? How much can you get? Are they renewable? What are the deadlines?

Do you have Scholarships for incoming transfer students? Do these grants have GPA requirements attached to them? How much can you get? Are they renewable? What are the deadlines?

Living on Campus - what are the requirements? What are the options? How much does it cost?

Part V – Scholarships...

Scholarships are totally up to you. You should begin in your junior to prepare by creating a resume and activity sheet that you can use to fill out scholarships. You also need to accumulate letters of recommendation. Better to do that now, when you are not facing deadlines, then next year at the last minute. Finally, plan some quality volunteering and / or experience shadowing over the summer so that you have a rich history to pull from for these scholarships.

I created this Scholarship site for Oakridge students! It has numerous resources, and can be of huge benefit to you. Go to the web ... <http://www.buildingabetterworld.net/> and lets do a little exploring. Finally, three items to concentrate on from the above website.

Go [here](#) to access the two videos featuring interviews with Oakridge graduates.

Video #1 - “Getting Organized”

We will watch Let’s Get Started Video in class...rewatch this video on your own. I want you to pull five solid suggestions learned from the video – and note the gal that provided that suggestion. And why its such a good idea.

1

2

3

4

5

Video #2 - “Muskegon Community Foundation”

This scholarship is the biggie in the Muskegon County area. The video I’ve created, interviews OHS students who have won this scholarship as well as the lead administrator at the Foundation. All of the individuals in the video provide tips on how to prepare and win a Muskegon Community Foundation Scholarship.

1

2

3

4

5

The OEA & Oakridge Parent Club - Building A Better World Scholarship -

Go [here](#) to access the Oakridge Building A Better World Scholarship. I created this scholarship in 2003. \$300 from me. \$300 from my mom. Our first year we gave out three \$300 scholarships. In 2014 we handed out three \$1750 scholarships. In addition to my annual donation, the Oakridge Education Association gives \$500. The Oakridge Parent Club \$1000. Past winners and teachers and administrators (not the Superintendent) donate as well. We hope this year to raise \$6000. We will give out three scholarships - 1 - Global Awareness. 2 - Community Involvement. 3 - Independent Travel. Take a look at the sight. Listen to the Podcast. View past winners. And remember this one when you are eligible as a Senior. Its a good one. It's all Oakridge. *The small pool scholarships are always better than Fast Web and such.*

Identify five things that you found interesting about the Building A Better World scholarship, from the sight information.

1

2

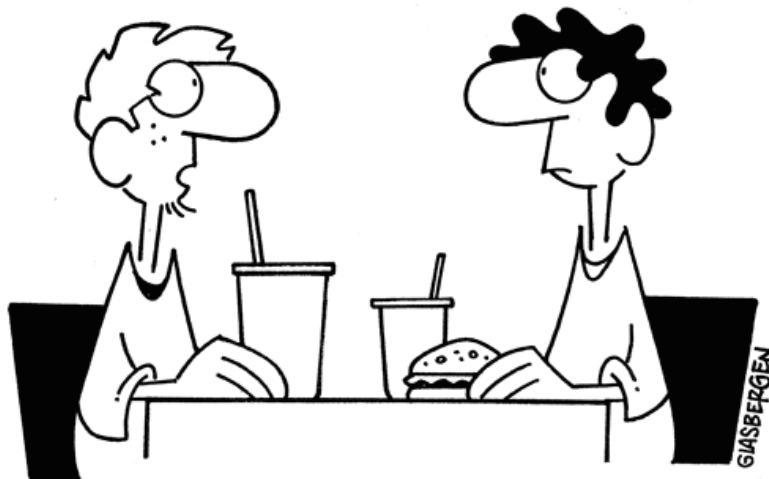
3

4

Finally, drum roll please....

Which of the three do you think that you would best qualify for, and why? Tell me about it. And don't forget next year to apply. Hope you learned a lot on this study of your future human capital and how to pay for it.

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**"I already owe \$15,000 in student loans.
And that's just for my high school prom!"**