Getting ready for year four: A checklist for parents of seniors

The Senior Year: Month-by-Month

- Every year: Discuss academic plans with an academic advisor
- Every year (October-November): Register for spring classes
- Every year (March-April): If loans funds are needed for Graduate School complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/

August

- Complete a degree audit http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/degree-audit.php
- Make sure you have a meal plan in place – commuter plans are available http://www.campusdish.com/en-US/CSSE/Charleston/MealPlans/
- Find jobs by using Cistern Online http://cisternonline.experience.com/er/security/login.jsp
- Keep up with important deadlines http://registrar.cofc.edu/calendars/index.php
- Check out the Fitness Facilities http://campusrec.cofc.edu/open-recreation/facility/facilities.php
- East Shore Athletic Club provides additional fitness options to students http://campusrec.cofc.edu/open-recreation/facility/esac.php

September

- Student should build a relationship with professors in their major
- Establish a credential file with the Career Center
- Collect recommendations and necessary materials needed for graduate school applications
- Participate in on campus interviews and keep up to date with employers coming on campus
- Attend Career Center workshops on topics such as choosing a major, resume writing, and interviewing http://careercenter.cofc.edu/
- Attend fall semester workshops offered by the Center for Student Learning http://csl.cofc.edu/study-skills/seminars/index.php
- Students who need help may want to request a tutor from the Center for Student Learning http://csl.cofc.edu/request/index.php
October

- If eligible apply for December graduation [http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/application.php](http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/application.php)
- Attend the Career Fair sponsored by the Career Center
- Think about faculty, staff, and employers that may be contacted to write recommendation letters - many graduate schools and potential employers will require recommendations
- Withdraw from any fall coursework by the withdrawal deadline [http://registrar.cofc.edu/](http://registrar.cofc.edu/)
- Begin completing graduate school applications
- Attend Career Center workshops on topics such as choosing a major, resume writing, and interviewing [http://careercenter.cofc.edu/](http://careercenter.cofc.edu/)
- Visit the Career Center before the end of the fall semester [http://careercenter.cofc.edu/students/index.php](http://careercenter.cofc.edu/students/index.php)

December

- If graduating in December don’t forget to order flowers and send out invitations
- Talk with professionals in the field – the Career Center has a Career Network of College of Charleston alumni just for this purpose
- Fall grades post - use the GPA calculators to set academic goals for spring [http://undergrad.cofc.edu/academic-resources/gpa-calculators.php](http://undergrad.cofc.edu/academic-resources/gpa-calculators.php)
- Discuss the semester and set goals for the spring semester
- Complete a degree audit [http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/degree-audit.php](http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/degree-audit.php)
- Make sure that all academic requirements will be completed during the spring semester

January

- If eligible apply for May graduation [http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/application.php](http://registrar.cofc.edu/graduation/application.php)
- Purchase an outfit to wear for job interviews – be professional and dress to impress
- Students should start looking for a full time position
- Come up with questions to ask employers during an interview – research the company
- Practice the interview by rehearsing answers to potential questions – the Career Center offers this service
- Research employers and job opportunities in various companies
- Research demographics and places where you would want to live and work
- Contact people used for recommendations to expect phone calls from employers
- Make sure that job search tools are error free and up to date
- Be sure that Facebook profiles and answering machine messages are appropriate in case potential employers make contact
- Attend workshops on interviewing and participate in a mock interview – this service is offered by the Career Center
- Let your network of contacts know that you are searching for a full time position
February

- Students should be on the look-out for upcoming deadlines related to job opportunities http://careercenter.cofc.edu/students/getexperience.php
- Make plans for Spring Break http://publicsafety.cofc.edu/helpfulinfo/springbreak.php

March

- Be sure to withdraw from any spring class by the withdrawal deadline http://registrar.cofc.edu/
- Make hotel and restaurant reservations for graduation
- Attend the graduation fair to get tickets for spring commencement or during the times scheduled in the Stern Center. View the Senior Information website for details.

April

- Participate in senior events http://www.cofc.edu/seniorinfo/ticket-information-may.php
- Start studying for exams early http://csl.cofc.edu/?referrer=webcluster&
- Order flowers for graduation http://www.cofc.edu/seniorinfo/attire-flowers-may.php

May

- Keep copies of cover letters, resumes, and recommendation letters
- Spring grades post
- Attend graduation rehearsal http://www.cofc.edu/seniorinfo/rehearsal.php
- Graduate!!

Senior Planning

Academic Planning:

- Participate in undergraduate research opportunities
- Students should run a degree audit (using Degree Works accessed through MyCharleston) to ensure they are meeting all requirements for graduation

Academic goals:

- Study for graduate school exams
- Utilize the services of the Center for Student Learning (http://csl.cofc.edu) and professor office hours.
- Complete senior thesis or final projects that may be required
- Apply to Graduate Schools and complete any required entrance exams
Career Exploration:
- Network with professionals in career fields
- Be sure to have an error free cover letter and resume
- Explore job search tools like Linked-In or Drop box apps that would make the search easier
- Students can utilize the services of the Career Center http://careercenter.cofc.edu/

Living off campus:
- Students can find information about living off campus using the guide to Charleston which can be found at http://reslife.cofc.edu/off-campus/guide-to-charleston.php
- Check out tips on being a good neighbor http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/community/goodneighbor.php

Student Clubs & Organizations:
- Get involved in clubs and organizations related to an academic major
- Keep connected - all enrolled students receive two to three emails per week with a list of on campus activities. Students who live off campus should stay involved with campus activities. A club and organization fair is held each semester http://studentlife.cofc.edu/

Staying Safe and Healthy:
- All enrolled students can use student health services
- Seniors are not required to have a meal plan but it is a very convenient way to dine. Check out http://www.campusdish.com/en-US/CSSE/Charleston/MealPlans/ for meal plan, block plan and dining dollar options
- If students are feeling overwhelmed their final year, they should utilize the services of the Counseling and Substance Abuse Center. They have counselors, support groups and peer counseling services available. You can find information about hours and services at http://counseling.cofc.edu/index.php

What Can I Do to Help My Senior Student?

**Tips on how you can help your student persevere through the senior year**
- Remind your student of all she or he has accomplished over the last three years.
- If your student is having academic difficulties, encourage them to consult with their academic advisor, Center for Student Learning, and/or with the staff in Counseling & Substance Abuse Services.
- Encourage your student to make use of all that CofC has to offer in terms of academic resources, support services, events, and student clubs and organizations.
- Encourage your student to take care of their physical well-being by getting enough sleep, eating healthy, and staying active.