

# COLLEGE PREP CHECKLIST

## FOR HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES

### PLANNING & ACADEMICS

- Get organized.** Buy a calendar – write in college visits, major fairs, etc. Use folders to organize material for financial aid, majors, scholarships, camps, honors, etc.
- Take the right classes.** Fine-tune your class schedule to meet college admissions standards. Ask your counselor.
- Consider AP classes.** Ask teachers and parents if it's right for you; classes may apply toward college credit.
- Your GPA matters.** Work for good grades. Read, write, and build your vocabulary. Set goals and stay motivated.
- Talk to upperclassmen.** Learn what you can from older high school students about ACT prep courses.
- Take a practice ACT.** Go to [ACT.org/PreACT](http://ACT.org/PreACT) and take the PreACT to give you a sense of the ACT.

### CAMPUS

- Visit UNK campus.** It's never too early to visit.
- Follow social media.** See what's happening at UNK.
- Get a taste of college life.** Attend a conference at UNK; have lunch with a friend on campus and visit their room.
- Talk with a UNK rep.** Request information and when a rep visits your school, ask many questions.
- Gather Information.** While visiting campus, ask for financial aid information and details about your major.

### MAJOR & CAREER PATH

- Explore career paths.** Identify interests, talk with others in various fields, job shadow, and research.
- Summer employment.** Find jobs in fields you're interested in to give you a better insight to a career path.
- Research.** What are high-demand jobs? What interests you and what degree or training is required? UNK has tools to help you. Visit [unk.edu/Focus2](http://unk.edu/Focus2).
- Review your online profile.** Examine your Facebook and other social networks. Delete content that may be viewed unfavorably by employers, colleges, and scholarship committees. Use caution posting.

### COSTS & FINANCES

- Discuss college finances with your family.** Will parents help pay? Will loans be necessary? Will you work during college? How much can you save?
- Save money.** Start now, create a plan, and put money in an interest-bearing account. Find summer jobs.
- Research financial aid.** Learn all you can about FAFSA, loans, grants, work study, and scholarships.
- Research scholarships.** Learn all you can about scholarships from local groups and businesses. What do they require? Search online to find a larger pool of regional and national scholarships.
- Get involved.** Extracurriculars, jobs, and volunteering are important elements for scholarships, especially those that develop leadership skills. Stand out.
- Record Your Achievements.** Begin an on-going list of your honors, awards, activities, volunteer work, leadership experience, etc. This will help build a resume later for scholarships.
- Build & Network.** Build good relationships with teachers and counselors who you can ask later to write scholarship recommendation letters.
- Attend financial aid sessions offered by your high school.** Be informed about the types of aid, including scholarships and how to qualify for them.
- Consider military options.** ROTC and National Guard will help pay for college. Talk to your counselor.
- Compare the cost.** If you consider other colleges, compare annual cost equally using 15 credit hours per semester for tuition/fees, room, meals, and indirect cost (books, clothing, transportation, etc.). UNK offers the lowest cost among all Nebraska universities.
- Weigh the cost.** Some jobs require a certain degree but don't require a degree from a certain school. If you're thinking of a pricier school, don't justify taking on huge debt for the "experience." The 30-year-old you, will thank you.