THE NEXT HURDLE

Military
Technical School
Two-Year College
Four-Year College

A guide to college for Paterson students

Name:_______________________

2015-2016 Edition
The Next Hurdle is a college guide produced by the Journalism III class of the School of Education and Training at the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex in Paterson, NJ in cooperation with the Paterson Education Fund and The Herald News.

The title and theme of this guide recognizes the hurdles students must overcome as they travel the journey to college. Read the student profiles that focus on the success of Paterson graduates who overcome many hurdles to earn their degree. Learn about the steps to get to college and how students can finance their post high school education to make it affordable. The staff of the college guide hopes that all Paterson students will realize their potential and get on the college track. To see where the staff is heading, check out the back cover.


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Front cover photo: Tavares Carter, 2014 PANTHER Academy graduate, practices the hurdles.

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Learn about yourself when planning a career

By Ebubekir Tas

Each year Career Day in high school offers students an opportunity to hear presentations from people who love to talk about their job. From health careers to technology and culinary arts, specialists in their field can answer questions about the educational requirements, salary and job prospects of their profession.

But you don’t have to wait until then to consider your career. Begin by taking inventory of your interests and personality. It may be helpful to take a career inventory survey to determine a field of interest. An Internet search reveals two informative sites at rutgers.edu and www.careertech.org. After you respond to a series of questions, the assessment will suggest a variety of careers which match your skill set and interest.

Finding what kind of career you are suited for is a tough decision to make. It is vital to do something you enjoy, something that you know has job openings and something that pays sufficiently. Consider the educational requirements and commitment necessary. For example, some careers, as listed below, require a two-year associates degree or certification while others require a four-year bachelor’s degree or even a master’s degree or doctorate.

Supply and demand is another consideration when picking a career. If there are a lot of people pursuing the same career, but there are limited available positions, there may be some difficulty finding a job in that profession.

Even though money isn’t everything, it should still play a significant role in pursuing a career. Investigate the salary range for careers to see whether it is sufficient to support yourself and a future family.

The value of a college degree

If you think a college degree is too expensive, think again. A study by the Pew Research Center found that young adults who did not go for more education after graduating high school were more likely to live in poverty and be unhappy in their jobs, if they were employed.

In comparison, roughly nine in 10 college graduates ages 25 to 32 said that their bachelor’s degree was valuable or will be in the future, according to Pew’s 2013 poll.

The report found a widening earnings gap between those who furthered their education and those who did not. For example, college graduates ages 25 to 32 who worked full time now typically earn about $17,500 more annually than employed young adults with just a high school diploma ($45,500 vs. $28,000); those with a two-year degree or some college training earned $30,000.

The study also revealed that three-fourths of all college graduates say they regretted not doing more during school to better prepare themselves to find a job, such as getting more work experience, studying harder or looking for work sooner. So, the hurdle of going to college and working hard is apparently a hurdle worth jumping.

Occasions with the Most Job Openings: Associate’s Degree or Postsecondary Vocational Award

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total Job Openings 2008–2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered nurses</td>
<td>1,039,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants</td>
<td>422,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses</td>
<td>391,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer support specialists</td>
<td>235,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists</td>
<td>220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive service technicians and mechanics</td>
<td>182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool teachers, except special education</td>
<td>178,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance sales agents</td>
<td>153,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration technicians</td>
<td>136,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate sales agents</td>
<td>128,000</td>
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Occasions with the Most Job Openings: Bachelor’s Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total Job Openings 2008–2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school teachers, except special education</td>
<td>597,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountants and auditors</td>
<td>498,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school teachers, except special and vocational education</td>
<td>412,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school teachers, except special and vocational education</td>
<td>251,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer systems analysts</td>
<td>223,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software engineers, applications</td>
<td>218,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network systems and data communications analysts</td>
<td>208,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software engineers, systems software</td>
<td>153,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction managers</td>
<td>138,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occasions with the Most Job Openings: Graduate Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total Job Openings 2008–2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary teachers</td>
<td>553,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors and surgeons</td>
<td>261,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>218,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>106,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, vocational, and school counselors</td>
<td>94,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical therapists</td>
<td>79,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical scientists, except epidemiologists</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health and substance abuse social workers</td>
<td>61,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional coordinators</td>
<td>61,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor
Start planning for college now

By Jeremiah James David Goodwin

8th Grade
* Talk with friends and family-Discuss careers choice and high school activities with friends and family. Research careers on the Internet and in the library.
* Consult with your counselors-Find out which classes you should take that will qualify you to attend certain colleges and/or enter certain career fields. Choose a themed high school that matches your interest.
* Talk about financial considerations-Ask your family how they can assist you in paying for your education.
* Maintain a strong GPA

9th Grade
Fall (September-November)
* Talk with your guidance counselor-Your counselor will be ready and willing to help you make the right college and career choice; set up a meeting to talk about your plans for high school.
* Do Extra Activities-Extracurricular activities are an important part of high school. Have the time to get involved with groups, clubs, or sports that interest you.
* Choose your classes-Make sure you are in the appropriate college-prep or tech-prep classes that you want to take. Key core requirements such as English, math, science, history, and a foreign language are important.

Winter (December-February)
* Maintain your letter grade-Get off to a good start with your grades because they will impact your GPA and class rank. Grades will count toward college admission and scholarships.
* Seek your interests and careers-Discuss your skills and interests with your guidance counselor.
* Start saving for college-Talk to your parents about saving for college expenses. If your family already has a savings plan, continue to add to it. If not, now is a great time to start saving for college.

Spring (March-May)
* Stay alert-Keep track of academic and extracurricular awards, community service achievements, and anything else you participate in, because you will need them for your future.
* Begin to look into college information-Review the college info that is available in your counselor’s office and school and public libraries. Use the Internet to view college profiles. Once you have done so, begin a college list that might interest you.

Summer (June-August)
* Start to visit colleges and campuses-Visiting relatives or friends who live on or near a college campus is a great way to get a feel of what college is like. Be sure to look at dorms, go to the library and student center, and walk around the campus.
* Stay involved-Have fun and begin your college preparation during the summer, such as volunteering, getting a job, or signing up for an enrichment program.

10th Grade
Fall (September-November)
* Practice the PSAT-Taking the PSAT as a sophomore will help prepare you for the real test next year. It also allows you to release your name to colleges so you can start receiving info from them.
* Start studying for the ACT/SAT-Ask your guidance counselor about preparation study guides and programs for college admissions tests.

Winter (December-February)
* Begin to look into the college admissions process-Study to know about the general college entrance requirements. The guidance councilor’s office, the library and college Web sites, are great resources.
* Continue seeking your career-Seek your career options more detail—research possible careers to learn about the tasks, education, and necessary training.

Spring (March-May)
* Try something new-Stay involved with your extracurricular activities and work toward leadership positions in your school. Become involved in community service.
* It’s important to READ-Knowing your reading skills will help prepare you for tests and make you a great reader individual. Read many books, newspapers.
* Practice your writing-You’ll need good writing skills no matter what path you want, so work on those skills now to get prepared.
* Get advice from your counselor-Meet with your guidance counselor to make sure you’re staying on track. You can also discuss your PSAT scores and ask about secondary options.

Summer (June-August)
* Contact colleges that interest you-Email or call schools and ask for more information about their academic requirements and any programs or activities that interest you. Start this process now if you think you want to attend a military academy.
* Take SAT practice tests-It’s often best to take these types of tests while the work is still fresh in your mind.
* Get a summer job-Finding steady summer work will demonstrate responsibility to colleges and employers. Putting the money you earn away for college will also help you get a head start on a personal savings plan.
**11th Grade**

**Fall (September-November)**
* **Check on your class rank and your GPA** - Colleges like to see a growth.
* **Take the PSAT** - Taking the test qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship program, which means you could earn money for college.
* **Consider your education options** - Decide whether you want to partake in full-time employment, further education or training or a military career.
* **Make a list of colleges** - Include schools that meet your most important requirements (See pg. 26). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you. Go to college fairs, attend college nights, and speak with college representatives who visit your high school.
* **Organize a testing schedule** - Determine the dates for the SAT, ACT and AP exams and mark the dates on your calendar.
* **Make sure you're meeting any special requirements** - If you want to play Division I or II sports in college, start the certification process and take a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements.

**Winter (December-February)**
* **Stay involved with extracurricular activities** - Colleges look for consistency and depth in the non-academic activities you pursue. Take on leadership roles and make a commitment to the same group.
* **Organize your college information and narrow your search** - Set up individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials.
* **Prepare for standardized tests** - Find out if the colleges you are interested in require the SAT, ACT and Tests. Register to take the tests you need.
* **Learn more about financial aid** - Gather information about financial aid from the schools you're interested in. Sponsored financial aid nights and advice articles are sources of information.

**Spring (March-May)**
* **Prepare a challenging schedule for senior year**
* **Start a scholarship search** - Check with your guidance office for scholarships from local organizations.
* **Contact your recommendation writers** - Teachers and guidance counselors are often asked to write recommendations for lots of students. Consider whom you want to ask now and let them know so they'll have time to prepare before getting tons of requests in the fall.
* **Apply for a summer job or internship** - Summer employment and internships in fields you're interested in will look appealing on a college application or resume.
* **Set up appointments at your top college choices** - Plan ahead when visiting colleges. Call the admissions office to set up a tour.

**Summer (June-August)**
* **Visit the campuses** - Be sure to visit your top five college choices.
* **Get advice from other college students** - Talk to family and friends about college life, especially if they attend a school you're interested in.
* **Organize your financial aid information** - Develop a plan that includes a list of the aid sources & requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines.
* **Compose rough drafts of college admissions essays**
* **Make early decision preparations** - If you plan to apply early decision to any school, take the time to visit the school again. If you elect to apply early decision, you should start working on your application as soon as possible because its deadline will be earlier than others.

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**12th Grade**

**Fall (September-November)**
* **Continue to visit schools** - Fall is a great time to look at the schools on your college lists because classes are in session and you talk with students.
* **Finalize your college list** - Decide which schools you will apply to. It's important to put a few safety schools on your list.
* **Stay on top of your grades and extra activities** - Colleges will look at what you've done in your senior year, so stay focused.
* **Take standardized tests** - Register and take the ACT and SAT tests. Request that your test scores be sent to the colleges of your choice.
* **Stay ahead of deadlines** - Make a calendar showing the application deadlines for admission, financial aid, and scholarships.
* **Get your letters of recommendation** - Give letters of recommendation forms to the teachers you have chosen, along with stamped, addressed envelopes so your teachers can send them directly to the colleges.
* **Talk to your guidance counselor** - Your counselor can help you stay on track with admissions requirements. Make sure they know which colleges want transcripts, score reports, and letters.
* **Finish applications** - Finish the application forms for the schools you're interested in. Proofread them and make extra copies before you send them. Make sure your school's guidance office have sent all necessary materials.
* **Keep searching for scholarships** - Apply for scholarships whose deadlines are approaching and keep searching for more scholarships and grants.

**Winter (December-February)**
* **React to early decisions on your applications** - Applied early decision, so you can find out if you were accepted. If you get in, you have to withdraw your applications to other schools.
* **Follow up on your applications** - Verify with your counselor that all forms are in order and have been sent out to colleges.
* **Submit financial aid forms** - Fill out the FAFSA, and if necessary, the PROFILE. The FAFSA will determine how much you’re expected to pay. These forms cannot be completed until after Jan. 1 of your senior year.
* **Send mid-year grade reports to colleges** - Ask your counselor to send your mid-year grade reports to your selected colleges.

**Spring (March-May)**
* **Check your mail for college info** - If you applied under the regular application process, you should receive an admissions decision by March or April. Notifications of financial aid awards arrive by the end of April.
* **If you’re on a waitlist, don’t give up** - Being put on a waitlist is not a rejection. Keep checking your mail; you should receive a decision by May.
* **Compare financial aid packages** - Consider each financial aid award carefully. Financial aid is a key factor in deciding where you will attend.
* **Prepare for AP and placement tests** - You may be taking Advanced Placement tests to earn some college credit as the school year winds down.
* **Choose your college** - Notify all schools of your intent by May 1. Make sure you ask your guidance counselor to send your final transcript.
* **Stay on track of financial aid information** - Make sure you have received a FAFSA acknowledgement.

**Summer (June-August)**
* **Attend your college’s EOF program** - Only if you are eligible.
* **Apply for student housing** - Get matched with a roommate.
Passaic County Community College: Where Success Starts

By PCCC Communications Department

Passaic County Community College’s Class of 2015 was the largest in PCCC history. Over 1,000 students graduated last May, some of them the first in their families to receive a college degree. Many consider coming to PCCC the smartest decision they ever made: academically, personally, and financially.

Passaic County Community College (PCCC) offers academic excellence, financial aid, and four convenient locations, all at an affordable tuition. Students can save significantly - up to $40,000 - on the cost of a four-year college education, by spending their first two years at a community college.

PCCC alumni have gone on to prestigious four-year colleges including Columbia and Harvard, as well as Montclair State, William Paterson, and Kean often on scholarship.

At PCCC, students can choose from over 80 degree and certificate programs in today’s fastest growing career fields, including technology, healthcare, business, education, arts, science, writing, and more.

Starting Fall 2015, PCCC introduces new programs in Environmental Sustainability, Music Technology, Medical Informatics (a combination of Information Technology and Healthcare), and Public Health.

PCCC is dedicated to student success with professors who give personalized attention, state-of-the-art labs and facilities, tutoring centers, and academic and career counselors. English Language Studies can help students reach the level of competency in English to begin college-level studies. The Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa honor society offer enriched experiences for high achieving students.

Degrees offered at PCCC are Associate in Science, Associate in Arts, and Associate in Applied Science.

Starting Fall 2015, PCCC introduces new programs in Environmental Sustainability, Music Technology, Medical Informatics (a combination of Information Technology and Healthcare), and Public Health.

PCCC’s degree programs transfer smoothly to bachelor’s degree programs at most four-year colleges and universities. Certificate programs are for those who plan to enter the job market directly after graduation.

Students who need money for college can apply for financial aid, scholarships, grant funding, and work study opportunities. Last year, PCCC awarded over $700,000 in scholarship funding.

With an eye on the future, PCCC offers students career guidance and counseling as well as opportunities in several programs to get on-the-job professional experience through internships and fieldwork.

PCCC also offers one of the most culturally diverse campus environments in New Jersey with a lively student life featuring athletics, a Student Government Association, a student-run newspaper and a wide variety of clubs and activities. Classes start every September, January, May, and July. Applications may be submitted online, by mail or in person at the Paterson, Passaic, Wanaque, or Wayne campuses. For more information about PCCC, academic programs, and admission, visit www.pccc.edu.
Honors @ PCCC offers academically talented students multiple enrichment opportunities

Academically talented students who want an enriched and advanced learning experience can take advantage of several opportunities at PCCC. The Honors Program allows qualifying students to take regular classes, but at a more intensive level. “Students in the honors program are required to complete more assignments and to accept more intensive assignments than their classmates in the same course,” explains Professor Nelson Bermudez, faculty advisor to the Honors Program. “This prepares high achieving students for the demands they will encounter when they transfer to a four-year college for their bachelor’s degree.”

The Honors Program also offers high achieving student enrichment experiences, such as lectures and workshops by experts in various professional fields, visits to museums and other cultural institutions, and regular social gatherings where students and faculty alike can enjoy lively conversation, share experiences, and develop a mutual support network.

Students who excel may also be invited to join Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the honor society for two-year colleges which seeks qualifying students who demonstrate superior scholarship, leadership ability, and community service. PTK members enjoy special scholarship opportunities as well as many social and professional nationwide networking benefits.

“Many of our Kappans have transferred not only to local four-year colleges but also to Harvard, Columbia, New York University, and University of Massachusetts among others,” said Professor Martin Bookbinder, PCCC’s faculty advisor to PTK. “They have also continued to schools with full or partial scholarships.”

Chi Alpha Epsilon is the national honor society that recognizes the academic achievements of students who have utilized or are enrolled in support services programs, such as EOP and SSS.

The PCCC chapter, Gamma Upsilon, was chartered in 2002. Membership is by invitation to qualifying students. CAE also offers members financial support and leadership opportunities.

If anyone knows about honors at Passaic County Community College, Laura Lopez does. A Paterson resident who graduated last May and hopes to become a math teacher in the city, Lopez took advantage of the honors program and was also a member of both Phi Theta Kappa, and Chi Alpha Epsilon.

“Being in the Honors Program has definitely prepared me for a four-year college,” said Lopez. “The classes are harder and writing papers is much more intensive.” Of her membership in PTK, Lopez commented, “It’s definitely an honor to know you are among the top students in the college.”

She credits CAE and EOF with assisting her financially and giving her opportunities to meet new people and make friends.

“Chi Alpha Epsilon has taught me that hard work pays off, and that it is not bad to strive for success,” said Lopez.

For more information, visit www.pccc.edu/honors.
Keep GPA high for college

As a SET freshman, Desteny Correa, 2015 graduate, ended the year with a .07 grade point average (GPA).

Because she did so poorly, she began the next school year as a 9R (a student who did not earn enough credits freshman year) and spent her time trying to make up the failed classes.

“In my junior year I had to take two physical education and one health class, summer school and in my senior year I had to take environmental science just so I could graduate on time,” said Correa.

She cautions students to stay on track and maintain a strong GPA because a few failing grades will seriously lower a student’s cumulative GPA.

“By senior year I was going to all my classes, motivated to do well and pull up my GPA. But it was too late to get into a four-year college. While my senior year GPA was a 3.5, my cumulative GPA was only 2.7,” explained Correa.

She took the SAT’s once and applied to Montclair State University and William Paterson University but was rejected by both.

“I plan to attend Passaic County Community College for two years, build a strong GPA, then transfer to MSU,” she said. Correa will major in psychology and minor in English.

The cumulative GPA is a calculation based on an average of all your final grades and is an important consideration for college admission and scholarships.

Generally, four-year colleges expect students to have at least a 3.0 for admissions. If you are pursuing more competitive programs in science, nursing, engineering, or prelaw, that number may rise to be a 3.5. Additionally, many college scholarships are based on a GPA, as are state tuition aid programs.

As Correa advised, “Have fun in high school but don’t stray. It’s very difficult to improve your overall GPA once you have failed several classes.”

Campus Explorer website offers several ways to build a GPA:
* Develop good study habits early. Don’t wait to the last minute to cram for a test. Do homework each night and hand in all assignments on time.
* Attend classes every day and be prepared with notebook and pen.
* Be organized. Keep a planner to know assignment and test dates.
* See you teacher when you are absent and make up work within two days.

Maintaining a GPA is equally important in college. According to US News & World Report, a high GPA is required for acceptance at top graduate schools such as Harvard Medical School (3.8 GPA), Yale Law (3.9) or Stanford Business School (3.6).

Students who enter the job market immediately after college graduation are advised to list their GPA on their resume, as long as it is a proficient number. Employers may consider a student’s GPA as they are looking through hundreds of resumes.

Community service builds leadership

By Arthur Griggs, Jr.

If you want to discover the real passion of a student, just look at their extracurricular activities. Clubs, service organizations and athletic teams tell just as much, if not more, about a student as their grade point average.

Extracurricular activities also play a part when you apply to colleges. Most college applications ask about your activities because the things you do in your free time reveal a lot about you. Additionally, scholarships are available to students who have served their community.

As a student in the School of Business, Technology, Marketing and Finance, I’m involved in a lot of clubs and organizations.

Being involved allows me as an individual to grow and become a leader. At first I wasn’t sure that I was fit to be president of the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) but in time I found that being a part of other small clubs prepared me for this role.

I also became an administrator for my academy and treasurer for DECA, a marketing and business program. This experience developed my personal finance decisions and my self-confidence.

Joining clubs will allow you to be a partner not only in great organizations but also allows you to make a difference within your community.

Gira Grullon, another BTMF senior, said her community service makes her high school experience even more enjoyable. “Being able to serve my community gives me a sense of ease because I know that I am helping my community become a better place slowly,” she said.

“I did community service since my freshman year, 2011. I’ve volunteered at my school’s open house and school fair. When I joined the JFK cheer team of 2012, it was mandatory to do community service. My former cheer coach arranged for our cheer team to assist the Elks Lodge in Totowa with their outreach to nursing homes, children with special needs and veterans.”

You can help your community by volunteering at your local church, hospitals, soup kitchens and schools. If you need more information, speak to your guidance counselor.
Upward Bound gives students a taste of college life

By James McLaurin

Just like hurdlers stretch and practice long hours before a meet, students need to prepare for college which is one of life’s rewarding experiences.

Every year hundreds of Paterson students join other teens in Upward Bound programs which are college prep programs that give students a taste of college life: dorm housing, challenging classes and a parent free environment. 

While advisers and program directors help students navigate their new surroundings, there are ways parents can help students prepare for the experience before they set foot on a college campus.

Students can participate in one of several college prep programs like those at WPC, Montclair State University, Rutgers University, PCCC, NJIT, Seton Hall and Ramapo College.

In Upward Bound, students explore mathematics, laboratory sciences, composition, literature, and foreign languages. The program offers tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, work-study programs, education or counseling services designed to improve students skills while in middle school and high school so they will be prepared for college.

Paid for by the U.S. Department of Education, Upward Bound provides academic support and college preparation activities to students, most of whom are from low-income families and will be the first in their families to graduate from college. These programs guide students on the path to a college or university and provide tools for academic success.

Another program called GEAR UP is also funded by the U.S. Department of Education through a partnership with the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and New Jersey City University.

One of the popular programs Paterson students attend is Upward Bound a three-year-program, for sophomores, juniors and seniors. As part of the program, students dorm at Ramapo College during the summer or commute with the college’s bus. Students remain home on the weekend for the five-six week program.

In addition to offering students a residential experience, Upward Bound provides an opportunity for students to take classes with college professors.

But it’s not just academics. Participants go on field trips every Friday during the summer, including college visits.

Saphire Miranda, junior from The School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics said her experience was amazing.

“I got an experience of what college is and the routine of a college student. It was really cool to dorm on an actual campus and take college courses. It made my passion to want to attend college after high school even stronger.”

Miranda says Upward Bound developed important skills for college such as time-management, responsibility, and independence.

The Ramapo College Upward Bound Math Science program gives support to high school students who have college potential. The main purpose of the program is to help the Paterson students obtain the skills necessary to pursue post-secondary education in the areas of STEM-science, technology, engineering, and math.

Students interested in applying should speak to their guidance counselor for an application form.
Start earning college credit while in high school

By Mizar Ahmed Chowdhury

If you go to Passaic County Community College after school, you’ll see classmates with curiosity in their eyes and determination in their face. They are the dual enrollment students who take college level classes while still in high school.

Around 200 students are enrolled in the STEM PCCC Dual Enrollment program which costs the students nothing. The STEM fund of PCCC covers all the cost of the courses in the STEM field. Dual Enrollment (DE) is a partnership between PCCC and local high schools where by qualified high school juniors and seniors enroll in a credit-bearing college course as part of their high school day.

Taking college courses during high school can help a student in several ways: standardized test preparation, earning college credit and enriching knowledge which certainly will help in high school classes.

A student can take up to 11 credits in one semester; duration of class varies according to the credit. A two or three-credit class will meet once a week and a four-credit course might meet twice in a week.

I believe it is never late to take dual enrollment classes because I started to take classes in PCCC during the last semester of my senior year. I took Calculus I and Intro Engineering in PCCC and General Chemistry I in JFK HS which is worth 10 credits.

College experience was always amazing for me because I was in class with mature people who were eager to learn, always asking questions. I loved PCCC’s library which has a large number of computers and books and a dual enrollment student can use it as much as a regular student.

Calculus I class helped me to prepare for the AP Calculus AB test as I didn’t have it in school. I am planning to skip that course in my four-year college because I feel comfortable with it after taking tests in PCCC.

Most of the courses are designed to be taken by juniors and seniors but there are many sophomores who take dual enrollment courses, as well. A 3.00 GPA is enough to be enrolled in this program with the approval of a guidance counselor.

“I always wanted to get a high score on the SATs. I decided to take College Algebra at PCCC as a review; I took Algebra in 8th grade and wanted to brush up on some skills,” Seren Ozer, STEM graduate said.

Registering for a dual enrollment class requires passing an Accuplacer/placement test which is based on Algebra I. Every high school student is recommended to attend the boot camp before taking this test.

“Accuplacer test might be hard for students who had a gap in studies but for high school students, it is not a big deal,” PCCC Professor Howard Schwartzberg, instructor of the boot camp for the Accuplacer, said.

Professor Schwartzberg also mentioned the high passing rate of high school students in that test, which was 82% among those who completed the boot camp for the test.

College has mainly two semesters, fall which starts in September and spring which starts in January. If someone needs to take the Accuplacer, he or she should contact the PCCC Stem Dual Enrollment Counselor Anjali Thanawala two months before the semester starts. Her contact info is: athanawala@pccc.edu, 973-684-7047.

“I started my college class during the spring semester at PCCC because I got some time to settle down with my high school schedule,” Suchita Sen, STEM graduate, said.

All the public colleges and most of the private colleges accept PCCC’s college credit, if the courses match the requirement with the student’s desired major.

Although a four-year college may not accept all your college credit, those classes will help you to build a good foundation.

For example, if you want to study engineering in a four-year college which requires three to four courses of calculus and advanced mathematics, the college won’t accept the College Algebra and Pre-Calculus classes offered through the Dual Enrollment Program. However, those courses will prepare you to study calculus on a college level.

College Algebra, Pre Calculus, Introduction to Engineering, Programming Fundamentals, Biology I & II, General Chemistry, Principles of Astronomy and many other courses are offered in PCCC STEM’s dual enrollment program.

There are many Humanities and Literature classes offered by PCCC which are not free but students are exempted from many fees. However, if it is offered in the high school, it is free, like Dual Enrollment English at JFK.

The Dual Enrollment Program can also be called a “money saving project” because many Paterson students saved thousands of dollars in college tuition.

“I earned 32 college credits while I was in STEM and I was able to transfer 29 credits to William Paterson University,” Mazher Misbah, STEM graduate said. By taking those college level courses for free, he saved $11,252 in tuition costs and earned enough credits to begin college as a sophomore.

Check with your guidance counselor to determine what Dual Enrollment programs exist for your particular high school.
Consider these factors when choosing a college

By Nahid Chowdhury

After working hard in high school, the next hurdle is deciding how to choose a college. What exactly should you consider?

When selecting a college, you should think about a variety of factors including the type of academic program and the availability of majors that interest you.

Here is a list of factors, which you can rank according to your personal preferences and needs. Try to determine the top five factors for you and begin to research colleges that fit your needs.

**Location** - distance from home

**Type of school** - (2-year or 4-year, public or private)

**School setting** - (urban, suburban rural)

Location and size of nearest city

Co-ed, male, female

Religious affiliation

Size

**Enrollment** - Do you want to attend a college with 14,000 or 2,500 students?

**Physical size of campus** - Do you like a large campus like Rutgers where you may take a bus to get to classes or one which you can walk from one end to another?

**Admission requirements**

Deadline(s) - Schools have a variety of deadlines for admission applications. Some are rolling admissions so you can send your application sometime before March of your senior year. Others require applications by Nov. 1.

**Test(s) required** - Some require SAT or ACT; others do not.

Average test scores, GPA, rank

**Academics**

Majors offered - Does it have the major of your interest as well as others to give you options?

Opportunities for internships and study abroad.

Retention rate - How many sophomores return? This figure indicates that the college carefully chooses from its applicants.

Graduation rate - How many students are able to graduate in four or five years?

**Accreditation** — recognized by regional or national accrediting bodies as meeting its objectives.

**Student-faculty ratio** - Will you get the attention you need or be in larger classes?

**Typical class size** - Will you have some classes in a lecture hall with 300 students or will your largest class contain 25 students?

**College expenses**

Tuition, room and board - Will you commute to avoid housing costs or aim for a scholarship to cover room and board?

Estimated total budget - Don’t forget to include cost of books and transportation.

Application fee, which is often waived for students who receive a free or reduced lunch.

Deposits - These are generally due by May 1.

Financial aid

Deadline(s)

Required forms

Percentage of student population receiving aid

Scholarships offered

Part-time employment opportunities

**Housing**

Residence hall requirements

Availability - Is housing guaranteed all four years?

Types and sizes

Food plans

**Facilities**

Recreational - gym and athletic fields

Size of library, condition of academic buildings

**Activities**

Clubs, organizations

Sororities/fraternities

Athletics, intramurals

**Campus visits** - Check out when you can visit to speak with students and professors, as well as admission counselors.

For more information, check out [www.actstudent.org/career/tips.html](http://www.actstudent.org/career/tips.html).

“I chose Penn State for all the opportunities it will give me in my business major. I like its large size and out-of-state location”...

Danielle Brown, BTMF 2015 graduate.

“Rutgers University is my choice because of its excellent computer engineering program. I like how big the school is and how there are so many things to do there. I can do many activities around the New Brunswick - Piscataway area”...

David Santiago, 2015 STEM graduate.
Know the strategies for SAT and ACT admission tests

By Destiny Spinelli

Once you hear the acronyms SAT and ACT you may feel some test anxiety. But with sufficient preparation, students can meet the challenge. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) are used as college entry exams.

The ACT measures what a student already knows, covering the subjects students have learned in high school. The SAT is used as a predictor of what a student is capable of learning. It deals with material a student may not have learned in high school.

Both the SAT and ACT should be taken once during junior year and the beginning of senior year in high school. Most colleges accept both scores, which gives you a better chance of getting into college. The college accepts your highest scores which is why it is recommended that students take the exams twice to achieve improvement.

The highest score on the SAT is 2400 for 2015; however, it changes to 1600 in 2016. With the highest score of a 36 on the ACT, the test has four different sections: math, English, writing, and science. In contrast, the SAT has three sections: math, English and writing.

The SAT focuses more on vocabulary and the ACT has more complex math. Both take about the same amount of time to take. The SAT is 3 hours and 45 minutes long; the ACT is 2 hours and 55 minutes.

The ACT focuses on the six different areas of mathematics. They are pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry and trigonometry.

The essay on the ACT is optional while the essay is mandatory on the SAT (before March 2016). It is best to check with the college to see if the ACT essay is required.

The Redesigned SAT debuting in March of 2016 has some major changes which students should prepare for with new study material. Brian Witte, a professional SAT tutor with Varsity Tutors, offered these five tips a recent Time Magazine article.

1. Practice with graphs. The Math section of the Redesigned SAT will increase its focus on algebraic and general problem solving, as well as data interpretation. Geometry will still be present, but in a smaller amount.

   Review and practice with ACT Science materials. Both ACT Science and SAT Math use data interpretation and graphing skills, so the time you spend on one exam can benefit you on the other.

2. Learn to work without a calculator. One of the most significant changes on the Math section is a calculator-free portion. This allows the SAT to test for real mathematical understanding.

3. Understand new answer formats. On the Redesigned SAT, you will no longer be penalized for wrong answers, and this means that there is no longer a reason to leave any questions blank. Random guessing will remain ineffective, but eliminating even one incorrect answer choice can lead to an improvement in your overall score. Another change is the extended-thinking question in the Math section. This question will be a word problem followed by several related questions, all of which test your problem-solving skills.

4. Focus more on reading and less on vocabulary. The Redesigned SAT will feature a single Evidence-Based Reading and Writing portion. Instead of memorizing lists of vocabulary words, work on analyzing passages. The test will also use real-world documents drawn from various areas of history and culture. Browse several from each era so that the language is somewhat familiar to you come exam day.

5. Investigate the essay. Beginning in spring 2016, the essay portion of the SAT will no longer be required for all students. If your colleges don’t request it, you may decide to opt out. The new essay will ask you to critically evaluate a passage. Preparing for the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing will help.

Although the SAT costs $52.50 and the ACT $38 without the writing portion and $54.50 with the writing, students who receive a free or reduced lunch are eligible for two fee waivers. These are available from your guidance counselor. Once you get the fee waiver, go to sat.collegeboard.org/register or www.actstudent.org/register to register.

Changes to the SATs will be made in 2016. The essay portion will be optional. It will only be required for some colleges. You will have the choice of taking the test digitally or on paper.

‘Some of the strategies I used were process of elimination and I reread the questions as many times as I needed. Testing might be very hard if you over think it too much’...Monica Navarro, 2015 SET junior.

Some students find the ACT less complex than the SATs. Some students apply the same strategies to the ACT. Monica Navarro, SET senior, took both the SAT and ACT in her junior year.

“Some of the strategies I used were process of elimination and I reread the questions as many times as I needed. Testing might be very hard if you overt hink it too much,” she said.

Henry Paulino, a 2015 BTMF graduate, has taken the SAT’s three times. “I read the questions before reading the passage in order to know what I was looking for. After taking the SATs three times I got a 1500. I am attending Seton Hall University and the required score is 1100,” he said.

Source: http://time.com/3893236/college-new-sat-tips/
The SAT or ACT is not the only test to take for college. Once accepted for admissions, a college may ask students to take the Accuplacer, a pre-assessment that tests knowledge in math, reading and writing. According to CollegeBoard.com, over 15,000 different colleges use the Accuplacer as a placement test for incoming students. The results will help the school match a student’s skill level with the appropriate course.

The Accuplacer is an online test; the questions are based on student responses to each question they have already answered. Questions increase or decrease in difficulty depending on the response. The test assesses student preparedness in reading comprehension, sentence skills, arithmetic, and elementary algebra.

Additionally, Accuplacer ESL helps place students of limited English proficiency in appropriate language courses. Developed as an assessment tool for ESL students and English as a foreign language (EFL) students, it has five sections: sentence meaning, language use, reading skills, listening, and WritePlacer ESL.

The Accuplacer tests are untimed, so students can move at a comfortable pace. It’s important that students don’t rush through the test but take their time to do their best and complete the test because the results are important in determining the courses the student takes.

The Accuplacer tests use a multiple-choice format except for WritePlacer and the written essay assessment.

When finished, the student will see a total score report containing the total of their correct scores and their percentile. The student’s total right score is a scaled score based on how they have answered the questions in the online format. The percentile rank is a comparison of their scores with those of other students who took a test consisting of similar questions.

Some colleges compile a score report that contains information about the types of courses they recommend for the student. Students must submit their test scores for their counseling session and for registering for classes.

Students are encouraged to prepare for the test by going to www.accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students for study tools, practice questions and a free Accuplacer app. The free app provides students with:

* Authentic sample tests
* Explanation of your responses
* Ability to save your work and resume taking practice tests at your convenience.

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### SAT’s 2015-2016 Registration Dates

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<tr>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Normal Deadline</th>
<th>Late Registration</th>
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<td>April 8, 2016</td>
<td>April 22, ’16</td>
<td>May 26, 2016</td>
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</table>

* New SAT

### Important SAT Reminders by CollegeBoard

* A pencil is required for the essay. An essay written in ink will receive a score of zero.
* Do not write your essay in your test book. You will receive credit only for what you write on your answer sheet.
* An off-topic essay will receive a score of zero.
* If your essay does not reflect your original and individual work, your test scores may be cancelled.

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### ACT’s 2015-2016 Test Dates

<table>
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<tr>
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**Accuplacer used for college placement**

By Danielle Brown

The SAT or ACT is not the only test to take for college. Once accepted for admissions, a college may ask students to take the Accuplacer, a pre-assessment that tests knowledge in math, reading and writing.

According to CollegeBoard.com, over 15,000 different colleges use the Accuplacer as a placement test for incoming students. The results will help the school match a student’s skill level with the appropriate course.

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Students explore college options by taking campus tours

By Jeremiah James David Goodwin

Going to Rutgers University for a campus tour was the best thing I’ve ever experienced in high school.

During my junior year in the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), I visited a number of colleges, including Kean, Seton Hall University, New Jersey City University and Rutgers-New Brunswick.

These campus visits gave me the opportunity to see what the colleges have to offer and helped me find my career.

While touring Kean and Rutgers Universities, I learned that the students and faculty emphasize how hard you will have to work and study to get over the next hurdle.

However, I took my first visit to the Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick in seventh grade. As I saw outstanding features about this college campus, I knew that Rutgers was where I wanted to study medicine and major in biology to pursue my career in anesthesiology.

Visiting different campuses is a great opportunity to get on the college track. It shows the differences between two-year, four-year, private, public and technical colleges.

“There are programs that typically include required courses and electives that allow students to explore the different types of studies there are,” said STEM Counselor Patricia Carr.

Some students prefer to attend a four-year college, such as one of the state or private schools, which offer bachelor, master and doctoral degrees.

Four-year schools offer students a different experience including residential life, more majors, expanded athletics, clubs and internships.

Students who begin pursuing their bachelor’s degree at a four-year college can take their required college courses as soon as they start their freshman semester, while exploring different electives. By the end of their sophomore year they need to declare a major of their choice.

New Jersey has 11 four-year public and 22 private colleges and universities in addition to four for-profit schools which grant degrees. However, some students choose a two-year college where they earn an associate’s degree which typically includes two years of full-time study and 60-65 credit hours. They may also earn a variety of certifications for health, technology and educational careers.

Tuition is less expensive and you can transfer credits to a four-year college to earn your bachelor’s degree. However, some credits in vocations and technology are not transferrable.

Generally, tuition at public colleges and universities is less expensive than private institutions. However, sometimes private colleges have greater resources for scholarships from private donors.

Types of college degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Associates Degrees</th>
<th>Types of Bachelor Degrees</th>
<th>Types of Master Degrees</th>
<th>Types of Doctoral Degrees</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.A. (Associate of Arts) – Requires students to complete a coursework of 60 hours and is often awarded in liberal art areas, like English, music or history.</td>
<td>B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) – Focuses on arts; requires some general education classes.</td>
<td>M.A. (Master of Arts) or M.F.A. – Graduate studies include education, communication, social sciences and music.</td>
<td>PhD. (Doctor of Philosophy) – Research-based doctorate degrees often awarded to recognize peer-reviewed published academic research.</td>
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<td>A.S. (Associate of Science) – Programs include biology and chemistry.</td>
<td>B.S. (Bachelor of Science) – Covers majors such as engineering, physics, accounting or business or sciences.</td>
<td>M.S. (Master of Science) – Covers wide range of science, health and even social science professions.</td>
<td>M.D. (Doctor of Medicine) – Most advanced degree for medical students and must be completed to professionally practice medicine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.A.S. (Associate of Applied Science) – Includes programs in business or engineering.</td>
<td>B.F.A. (Bachelor of Fine Arts) – Professional actors, dancers, singers, sculptors and painters are perfect candidates for this degree. BFA degree is also offered in fields such as digital media and web design.</td>
<td>M.Res. (Master of Research) - Training on how to conduct research</td>
<td>M.D. students often choose a specialty area.</td>
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<td>A.E. (Associate of Engineering) – Focuses on engineering</td>
<td>B.B.A. (Bachelor of Business Administration) – BBA degree often covers courses in management strategy, decision making and even organizational psychology.</td>
<td>M.Phil. (Master of Philosophy) – A research-only degree</td>
<td>Ed.D. (Doctor of Education) – Highest level degree of education in the education field. People who hold this degree often work in research positions related to education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.A.A. (Associate of Applied Arts) – Deals with applied arts</td>
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<td>LL.M. (Master of Laws) – A one-year full-time or 2-4 years part-time course.</td>
<td>J.D. (Juris Doctor) – Most advanced one for lawyers in the U.S.</td>
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<td>A.P.S. (Associate of Political Science) – Mainly focuses on political science.</td>
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<td>M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) – Designed for management professionals.</td>
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Historically Black Colleges offer other options

By Ravon Leary

Deja Cordova wanted a college that helped her develop her understanding of African American culture.

“I wanted to be in an environment that not only touched on the achievements of African Americans but gave me the thorough background on the culture,” Cordova said.

Cordova, a 2014 graduate of the School of Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, is one of more than 324,000 students who attend an Historically Black College.

There are more than 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States. The principal of these institutions was to educate freed slaves to read and write.

HBCUs offer African American students a place to earn a sense of identity, heritage, and community.

Cordova, a sophomore at The Lincoln University in Lincoln University, PA., said her school requires all students to take a course in the African American experience.

“The African American experience class I took reviewed some topics I learned previously such as the Civil Rights Movement more in depth and also taught me about things that were overlooked in my high school curriculum.”

Her interest in HBCUs began in the summer before her senior year when she visited HBCUs including Delaware State, Virginia State, Clark Atlanta and Lincoln University.

“Lincoln University was the best option financially,” she said, since they offered the most money.

Another student found an HBCU tour to be enlightening. Nahzir Williams, a 2015 graduate of The School of Business, Technology, Marketing, and Finance, attended an HBCU tour that is held annually in the city of Paterson.

The experience, “made me just want to attend college,” said Williams who is now a freshman at Morgan State. “Not only was the trip great, I learned about the rich culture that HBCUs offer. We were in team building exercises that gave us the opportunity to bond together. “

HBCUs offer all students, regardless of race, an opportunity to develop their skills and talents. These institutions train young people who go on to serve domestically and internationally in professions.

Some of the top HBCU choices are:
• Spelman College – an all-female school located in Atlanta, GA.
• Howard University – a private institution that was founded in 1867.
• Morehouse – an all-male school located in Atlanta, GA.
• Hampton University – a private institution that was founded in 1868.

Young-Adults Can Achieve is a program that helps high school students in Northern New Jersey to achieve their dreams of furthering their education. The yearly university tour they organize provides students with a college experience. For more information about an HBCU tour go to: www.youngadultscanachieve.com.

Vocational schools offer career options

By James McLaurin

Among the many choices of continuing your education after high school are vocational colleges and trade schools. They specialize in providing the vocational and technical skills student need in order to perform the tasks of a particular job.

Vocational schools are traditionally distinguished from two-year junior college and four-year universities by their goal to give job-specific training and education to students who are typically bound for blue-collar jobs in the workforce.

Popular schools include Lincoln Technical Institute, DeVry University, Eastwick College and Fortis Institute.

Eastwick Education’s HoHoKus Schools offer a variety of specialized trades programs to meet this growing demand, with a focus on hands-on training.

STEM 2015 graduate, Tamara Hejab will study Diagnostic Sonography at Eastwick this fall.

She said she decided to study this because “it is one of the top careers and I want to be part of that special moment when I scan an expectant mother to learn the gender of her baby. It warms my heart. I wanted to be involved in the medical field without dealing with blood, diseases, etc.”, she said.

Fortis Institute in Wayne is another local vocational school offering a variety of certifications in health, technology and trades.

Michael Masen, 2015 ACT graduate, has set his sights on Fortis to become an electrical system technician. The school trains students to service and repair a wide variety of low voltage electrical applications including home theater systems, security and alarm systems, home audio, video and fiber cabling, home computer networks, and cable and wireless applications.

Masen is enrolled in an 11-month program to obtain his certification. Tuition is $17,000 which Masen said was less expensive than another school he researched. He is looking forward to a hands-on career that he can begin in the near future. The school also provides internships so he can get job experience.
When asked at the age of eight what I wanted to be when I grew up, the answer would change several times before lunch. Ask me now at the age of 16 and the answer is unlikely to be anymore certain.

Eighty percent of teenagers who are interested in attending college after high school have yet to choose a major according to Dr. Fritz Grupe, founder of MyMajors.com. In spite of that they are still expected to choose colleges and pick majors, even if still unsure of career goals. Perhaps that is why more than fifty percent of college students change their majors at least once during their college years according to Dr. Grupe.

But why is that? Blame it on the increasing amount of career paths, and the lack of exposure teens in Paterson face toward the quickly expanding academic programs available for us. Colleges and universities recorded nearly 300 new majors to their list in 2010 when the U.S. Education Department updated its collection of academic programs.

However, now that most colleges have added the ‘undecided major’ to their many new career choices, teens don’t have to be as stressed deciding their life path at such a young age. Attending college with an undecided major guarantees you time to explore and find what you are truly passionate about, rather than choosing a career path based on the same six subjects you have been taking all your life.

Mr. Blair Seidler, a math teacher at the School of Education and Training took several career paths in his life and encourages students to be open to different options.

“Why should you know what you want to do when you grow up now? I didn’t figure it out until I was 35.”

Mr. Seidler never really imagined himself as a math teacher when he was younger. He always knew that he had a passion for math but to think that he would be a high school teacher at this point in his life never really occurred to him.

When Mr. Seidler was asked about the career paths he took before becoming a math teacher, he stated, “I majored in computer science at Columbia University and I really kind of got away from math. I spent time as a programmer, I spent time as an IT specialist on Wall Street, and I spent time as a professional card player before I cycled back and became a math teacher when I was 35.”

Statistics reported in a recent study that “our generation will go through at least seven career changes during their lifetime.”

So going into college with an undecided major may just be the right fit for you. It is estimated that 75 percent of students who enter college with a decided major change their major at least once before graduating.

Entering college as an exploratory student will give you more chances to discover yourself. And although going to college with an undecided major may be a little frightening for most, it could be the best choice you’d make for yourself.

Being unsure of what you want to do in college should not be stressful anymore, and you should not have to choose where you want to be in thirty years at such a young age.

As Mr. Seidler said, “I’m still not entirely sure what I’m going to do when I grow up. I’m mostly glad that I haven’t completely grown up yet, but understand that the journey is more important than the destination, the direction is more important than the goal... just make sure that you’re going in a positive direction when choosing a career.”

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself when considering a college major

1. Why do I want this major?
2. Do I know enough about this major?
3. What are the requirements for this major?
4. Is the college I chose strong in this major?
5. What are the career opportunities for this major?
6. Is this the right and only major for my career path?
7. Have I talked to someone in this major?
8. Will I be good at this major?
9. Do I want to pick a traditional major at all?
10. Is this the right time to declare a major?
JROTC prepares students for life

By Arthur Griggs, Jr.

What is it that drives a student to become apart of something so challenging? For Paterson JROTC cadets, Maurice Cunningham and Tatyana Owensby, the program was the perfect opportunity to prepare for college or a military career.

The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program is a popular elective at Eastside High School and the John F. Kennedy Education Complex. The curriculum includes training in emergency preparedness, military history and physical fitness.

It teaches discipline, respect and preparation for college. Enrolling in the program is real simple; all you have to do is see your guidance counselor. Whether or not you plan to enter the military, JROTC offers something for every student.

“I want to serve my country one day and I believe the JROTC program has prepared me not only for the military but for the world. With the hard work, dedication, leadership skills, responsibility, values and discipline that I learned, I’m prepared academically, as well as socially for anything or anyone,” said Senior STEM Member Cadet Tatyana Owensby who joined JROTC in her junior year.

After high school, Owensby plans to major in sports, entertainment and event management at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. She credits the program with helping her academically as well.

Cunningham agrees. “Since I joined the JROTC, I’ve been a straight honor roll student who is respectful. I use what we learn in every day life. I think the JROTC program was a great experience and I can’t wait to join the college level JROTC program because I truly enjoyed being in such a great program,” he said.

After attending the JROTC, students are eligible for a scholarship for college. “Before going to the military, it’s best that you go to college first,” said 2015 SET graduate, Cadet Adria Redmond. She is studying nursing at Bloomfield College using her JROTC scholarship.

“I joined the JROTC program as a freshman at Eastside. The training and presentations we had to do prepared me for college,” she said.
How to make college affordable for you

By Henry Paulino, Jr.

College is one of the biggest investments you will ever make. With tuition at state colleges running over $10,000 a year, students need to understand the primary resources to pay for college: scholarships, grants, Federal and private loans, and Federal Work-study.

The best of funding options are scholarships and grants because they don’t need to be paid back unlike loans which accrue interest on top of the principal amount borrowed.

Guidance counselors have lists of local scholarships for Paterson students. Be sure to meet the deadlines. Other helpful websites are: fastweb.com and collegescholarships.org.

The Federal Work Study program (also known as FWS or simply Work-Study) is a federally funded program that helps students with financial aid. Students can work 20 hours a week on their college campus and be paid directly. The job is an ideal way to pick up extra cash for books and living expenses. You apply for the Federal Work Study program when you complete your college application.

The federal government is the largest provider of college loans and therefore, offers a lower interest rate than private loans that come from a bank, credit union, state agency, or a school.

If students must borrow money for college, a federal loan includes many benefits not typically offered with private loans. For example, federal loans have many repayment options from paying just interest while you are in college or delaying payment until you graduate or leave school. Private loans often require payments while you are still enrolled in school.

Additionally, the interest rate on a federal loan is fixed and is often lower than some credit card interest rates while a private loan has a interest as high as 18% or more.

For a federal loan, you don't need to have an established credit record while a private loan may require one. A co-signer is not needed for a federal loan but for a private loan.

According to The Washington Post, the national debt is approaching $1.3 trillion and many young graduates struggle to find jobs that pay enough to cover their monthly payments. But the federal government has developed new policies to give students more options for repaying loans.

Yet, only 14 percent of Americans with federal student debt are enrolled in government plans that allow them to lower payments if they’re not making enough money to cover them, according to the Department of Education. The Public Student Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) encourages students to enter and continue to work full-time in public service jobs. Under this program, borrowers may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance of their Direct Loans after they have made 120 qualifying payments on those loans while employed full time by certain public service employers.

However, loans received under the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program, the Federal Perkins Loan (Perkins Loan) Program, or any other student loan program are not eligible for PSLF.

For more information, go to studentaid.ed.gov.

Receiving any kind of financial aid begins with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the application for HESA which is the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

One Paterson student has her tuition costs for William Paterson University practically covered. “By filling out FAFSA and HESA, I was given an award package that covered everything for me. Between grants and scholarships, all I have to do is pay about $90. Luckily, I don’t have to take out any loans”... Sema Miah, STEM 2015 graduate
Financial aid for college begins with the FAFSA

By Destiny Spinelli

Getting money for college begins with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly known as FAFSA. Those five letters will be an important acronym for all students pursuing an education beyond high school.

The federal government uses this information to determine the amount of financial aid a student needs to attend college based on the family’s economic status. This figure known as Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is sent to the colleges you list on the FAFSA. The institution’s award letter is based on the EFC.

Students and their parents need to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after Jan. 1 of the academic year they plan to enroll in college. Many schools set priority deadlines for completing the FAFSA. Students who file their FAFSAs after these deadlines could lose out on school-based grants or scholarships.

Complete the FAFSA online by going to www.fafsa.gov. Both students and parents need to apply for a Personal Identification Number that will be used as an electronic signature for FAFSA. The PIN can be obtained by going to www.pin.ed.gov.

Students need to complete the FAFSA each year they are in school. In order to fill out the FAFSA form, the following documents are needed: Social Security number, Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen), most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned. You also need bank statements, records of investments (if applicable), records of untaxed income (if applicable), Federal Student Aid PIN to sign electronically.

Once you complete your FAFSA, save copies of your completed FAFSA form, along with copies of all the information you gathered. Keep all documents in a safe place for future reference.

To assist students in completing the FAFSA, a College Goal Sunday is held each year at Passaic County Community College. To reserve a seat just go to www.njcollegegoalsunday.org.

NJ STARS supports NJ scholars

By Amir Younus

Mifta Uddin never thought he could go to college without paying tuition but good grades, dedication, and the NJ STARS program helped him to accomplish his dream.

After finishing among the top 10 seniors in Passaic County Technical Institute in 2012, he enrolled in the NJ STARS program which financially rewards students who are in the top 15% of their graduating class.

“Going to college for free was amazing. I never knew that was possible. After hearing this opportunity, I enrolled right away. I couldn’t let this slip past me,” Uddin said.

He went to Passaic County Community College for two years then New Jersey Institute of Technology, where he is now a sophomore pursuing an engineering degree. Maintaining a GPA above 3.25 makes him eligible for NJ STARS II that gives him financial support to earn his bachelor’s degree. All this, without any college debt.

The NJ STARS program is a state tuition assistance program that offers paid tuition to a community college for seniors who rank in the top 15% of their class. Guidance counselors notify students of their eligibility.

Additionally, students must score 540 or better on the critical reading and 530 or better on the math portions of the SAT. They must at least take 12 credits and will be allowed to take 18 per semester. The college will notify students who do not achieve the required placement test scores that they need to work on their scores to continue with the NJ STARS program.

Upon completion of the two years at a community college, students must have a 3.25 GPA to be eligible for NJ STARS II, which grants them $2,500 per year at any New Jersey public or independent NJ Tuition Aid Grant (NJ TAG) participating four-year college or university.

Despite the tuition savings by participating in the NJ STARS program, not all top ranking seniors take advantage of it. Some prefer to attend a four-year college for that residential experience while others decide to attend a private college in New Jersey.

Danielle Brown, 2015 BTMF graduate, didn’t want to enroll in the NJ STARS because she wanted the residential experience and curriculum offered by Penn State.

Another BTMF graduating senior, Gira Grullon, decided to attend St. Peter’s University in Jersey City. “I didn’t take advantage of the NJ STARS program because St. Peter’s offered me a huge scholarship. I wanted to get the college experience and go away,” she said.

For more information on NJ STARS go to www.njstars.net.

EOF provides financial and academic support

By Lucia Veliz

The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) is a program for students in New Jersey that want to attend a college with the help of the financial assistance and the special services.

Frank Veliz, 2014 graduate of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), is part of the EOF program at Passaic County Community College.

“The program is worth the commitment. It has helped me academically and financially,” he said. EOF is available to students who want to go to a New Jersey college but need financial support. It begins with a mandatory orientation for all accepted students.

As a high school senior, Veliz applied for EOF when he completed his application to PCCC. Before being accepted, he went to an interview and signed a contract to commit to two lab hours per week for a minimum of two hours, two counselor meetings per month, two freshman brotherhood/sisterhood per month, two workshops per month, and one EOF conference every semester.

“Students enrolled in PCCC for EOF are treated like scholars because those students are on the right path to graduation and a four-year program,” said Velez.

To determine placement for his courses, Veliz took an assessment to see if he needed remedial courses before taking college-level courses. He has attended English and math boot camps in his program, which helped him gradually move up to passing the course. Those summer classes were held 10 consecutive days and on the final day he had to take a test, which determined if he passed or failed.

To qualify for EOF, students must: provide educational and economical background documents, be a New Jersey resident, apply to an in-state college or university and be accepted, meet the academic criteria, and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

EOF 2015-2016 Eligibility

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For each additional member of the household add $8,120.
Managing your time and money in college is a priority

Make a plan
By Naeem McNeil

Chances are that you often have trouble balancing time between schoolwork, clubs, athletics or a job. The concept of time management can be even more difficult in college where the studying and work load get more intense.

However, there are ways to make that transition smoother and lead to success that first semester. U.S. News and World Report came up with 12 tips that can help you have fun while doing well academically.

1 - Schedule your classes in blocks over three days so you have more time to study. Remember, scheduling classes is different from high school. Classes either meet twice weekly for 90 minutes or once a week for 180 minutes, with a break.

2 - Make a study plan - Use a daily planner on your cell phone, tablet or even laptop. Enter all your assignments and due dates. Remember, every hour of lecture equals two hours of study time.

3 - Attend all your classes - Missing one class in college can get you far behind. Having someone else take notes may not be best for you, unless you are sick. Be sure to email the professor if you are ill and must miss class. Communication with your instructor is key.

4 - Determine your best study time. Are you a morning person or do you work best in the evening?

5 - Keep a log to see how long it takes you to do your homework, prepare for quizzes, write papers, etc.

6 - Do your homework on time. Read the text before the lecture so it’s familiar to you. Study the material weekly so you aren’t cramming.

7 - Balance your courses. Spend different amounts of time depending on the course’s difficulty. You’ll be taking four or five courses, each of which will count for 25 or 20 percent of your grade.

8 - Learn to focus without breaks and without additional stimulation for 15 to 20-minute units.

9 - Plan to do each task once. In other words, take good notes the first time and review them. Read with focus the first time.

10 - Break up large projects like research papers and finals into chunks. Spread the assignment over a reasonable amount of time and always allow extra time for problems that arise.

11 - Don’t take extended time off. You can’t afford not to be in class for stretches of time. During peak times like midterms, seminar presentations and exams, don’t allow for distractions.

Spend your money wisely for books
By Naeem McNeil

College students spend an average of $1,200 per year on textbooks and course materials according to The New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG). However, there are cheaper ways to pay for college textbooks.

First, get the list of required books as soon as possible. You can find the list at the college bookstore and from the course itself online. You don’t want to get to class and not have the textbook.

Get the books’ ISBN numbers and comparison shop. Check prices on the Web sites of Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, eBay, efollet.com and CengageBrain.com. To save time, comparison shopping sites such as book.ly or SwoopThat. Book.ly focuses specifically on textbooks in all formats, and SwoopThat allows you to compare prices for the books you’ll need based on your courses.

Renting textbooks is increasingly popular, too. Similar to online movie-rental services, sites like BookRenter.com and Chegg.com allow you to rent textbooks rather than buy them. You must be careful to return your books on time so your rentals aren’t converted to purchases. Check to see whether your college or university offers a textbook rental service to help you save money.

Five textbook publishers — Pearson, John Wiley & Sons, Cengage Learning, McGraw-Hill Education and Bedford, Freeman & Worth Publishing Group — have teamed up to make thousands of textbooks available in the less expensive e-book format through CourseSmart.com.

Amazon.com launched the Kindle Textbook Rental. You don’t have to own a Kindle to read the rented books; once you rent them, they can be accessed using free Kindle Reading Apps for PC, Mac, iPad, iPod touch, iPhone, BlackBerry, Windows Phone and Android-based devices.

Of course, the library and other students in your class can be good sources, too.
DeMond James graduated with high honors last May 21 in the Passaic County Community College’s 43rd Commencement where he received his Associate in Arts Degree in Liberal Arts/Communication. A week later, the 42-year-old departed for an exciting study tour in China.

DeMond is one of three PCCC honor students, all Paterson residents and adult learners, selected this year by the International Scholar Laureate Program, an independent organization that promotes global learning opportunities for qualifying students.

“My high school academic career gave no indication that I would ever be an honor student let alone considered an International Scholar Laureate,” said DeMond who attended high school in Minnesota, but was not a high achiever there. “I did just enough to get by,” he said.

Though DeMond later became a successful businessman in sales and marketing, he realized he needed a college degree to advance in his career. He enrolled in PCCC in 1997, but his education was interrupted twice, once by career demands, then later by serious illness. But he was determined to get a degree.

DeMond returned to PCCC in 2012 and this time fell in love with learning. “PCCC has a nurturing environment that feels like a close-knit family,” said the graduate who became a member of the Honors Program and was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. He also received a merit scholarship from the PCCC Foundation.

DeMond will enter Rutgers University in September to pursue his bachelor’s degree in social work. He plans on a career counseling young adults. Looking to one day earn a doctoral degree, DeMond believes his start at PCCC made the difference in his life. “For the price you pay, you get a quality education, but you have to work it. You just have to do the work.”

Marlena Fraginals is a parent with a purpose. She has her sights on earning a college degree to make her family proud.

The Paterson resident, a graduate of North Bergen High School, has returned to Passaic County Community College where she is majoring in Human Services. Coming back to college as a young mom has its hurdles, from time management to babysitting, but Fraginals’ sister has helped her to better herself. With her sister being a big part of her life, she wanted to make her proud and achieve greatness.

Fraginals has a long-term goal to become the head of an organization that helps people with their addictive problems. She says she wants to help people who feel like they are alone. Her goal is to change as many lives as possible.

It’s hard being a parent and going to school at the same time, said Fraginals. “Being a parent is hard but beautiful,” she said. “It’s not easy to balance your time but where there is a will there is a way and I make it my business to do this because my goal is to finish for my son and make him proud.”

Fraginals receives financial aid to help pay for the tuition and books. Sometimes she will rent books to make the cost less.

“I chose PCCC because when I went there, it felt like home. I appreciate the effort my teachers and the college puts in to meet the needs of every student,” she said.

Help for adult learners

It’s never to late to go back to school. There are many privileges for adult learners.

Being an adult learner doesn’t limit your opportunities. You are still able to take out student loans, receive grants and even scholarships. For example, the Adult Students in Scholastic Transition Scholarship is offered to adult learners over the age of 30. This scholarship helps adults who are facing economic, financial, social or physical challenges. Check out these websites for scholarships for adult learners:

* studentadvisor.com/scholarships/16403-Get-Educated-Online-College-Scholarship-Program
* http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/nontraditional.phtml
* http://www.classesusa.com/
* http://www.educationconnection.com/landingpages/scholarships-for-women
http://www.scholarshipworkshop.com/adult-scholarships.html
College gives Paterson students more opportunities to shine

From Bangladesh to NJIT

By Mizan Chowdhury

When Mihadul Haque stepped into college, he understood the experience would be different than high school, but would it be a positive one?

The first thing his Literature instructor said was “I am your professor, not your teacher and I am not evaluated on your results.” Haque understood that he had to learn by himself with the help of his professor but they were not going to teach him unless he was prepared to learn.

“He was always prepared to learn by himself with the help of his professor but they were not going to teach him unless he was prepared to learn.”

“High school was a straight path for me without any speed breakers or big turns,” said Haque who maintained a GPA of 3.9 in the School of Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. He completed 9th grade in Bangladesh and started STEM as a sophomore. He considered his early American life as “ambiguous” because he didn’t know where he fit in.

“Living in a basement and working in a food court, it was hard for me to think about higher education,” said Haque. However, it became possible because he was living the “Bangladeshi Dream,” the dream of every Bangladeshi to go to college.

While he said he made some positive and some negative decisions during high school, the best of all was testing out of ESL classes in a year which he did by completing three ESL courses in one year.

Looking back, Haque regrets not taking challenging classes like Honors, Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment, but attributes those decisions by thinking as a new immigrant.

“The most regretful thing in my life was that I didn’t know anything about the SAT before I actually registered for it,” said Haque.

He applied to Ramapo, WPU, MSU, RU and NJIT and got accepted into all of them. He thinks his senior class ranking which was in the top ten and his Paterson residency helped him to get accepted.

Haque chose NJIT because he could commute to it and save his $12,000 a year in room and board. He purchases a student bus pass each month which costs him only $75 and he can go to NJIT with a single bus from downtown Paterson.

But the transition was not easy. At the day of orientation Haque met his classmates who had better SAT scores than him, which was intimidating. He thought, “Am I even capable of standing in front of them, let alone competing?”

“My major is computer science but I did not know course requirements before I actually registered, but my classmates already had the list of homework with the due dates in their folders,” said Haque. He did not know that the course catalog was on the college website.

“It was hard for me to cope with course work the first semester,” he said. “I prayed and motivated myself by thinking I will have to work even harder with my body if I give up and do not study to earn a degree,” he added.

Haque is overcoming the obstacles at NJIT. The Newark campus and the computer science department have become his second home. He is also an active member of the Bangladeshi Student Association and he participates in campus activities.

TCNJ student advises: “Be prepared to work hard”

By Naveem McNeil

Grace Lugo, 2012 graduate of the School of Government and Public Administration at Eastside, not only prepared academically when she was attending Eastside High School, but she also pursued every avenue to learn about her next hurdle, choosing a college.

“When looking for colleges I turned to my assigned high school guidance counselor who was very helpful. However, I also received a lot of guidance on which colleges to apply and which preparatory steps to take from the Upward Bound program at the Ramapo College of New Jersey,” Lugo said.

“To prepare for college, I participated in a college preparation program throughout the length of my high school experiences,” she said. “I was looking for a small campus because I believed that was the most important asset in a college. Being on a college with a small campus, the student-to-teacher ratio will be lower and it will give me the opportunity to meet all my teachers who would know my name and personality.”

After much diligence, Lugo decided to attend The College of New Jersey, a highly selective school in Ewing. “The greatest transition from EHS to TCNJ was learning how to manage time and I also learned how to study. Another factor was meeting new people. Many people think that college is all about course work but it’s not. If you do not make friends or take part in any extracurricular activities, your time in college will be miserable. Additionally, another big challenge for me was the fact that the majority of students in my introductory biology course had taken an AP biology course during my freshman and sophomore year while I was in ESL,” she explained.

Ludo is now a biology secondary education major on the pre-medical path. “I know it’s a little strange but what I like most about the program is the richness of the core curriculum, as well as the wide range of optional biology courses that appeal to all aspects of biology,” she said.

While her ultimate goal is to become a doctor, Lugo said she is on the verge of learning about internal medicine but she isn’t sure.

“Nevertheless, to achieve this goal I’m taking a strange route because I will be applying to “Teach for America” this upcoming semester. I plan to take two gap years to complete this program because I enjoy the education field. After this process is complete, I plan to apply to medical school to pursue my MD,” she said.

Lugo encourages students to be diligent in their studies knowing that hard work is necessary to be successful. “Be prepared to work extra hard. To succeed in college you need to be possessive; you have to go get it because it isn’t going to come to you,” she advised.

“You need to be able to talk to everyone and anyone who could potentially help you achieve your goals and pursuits. Also, it is important to remain focused and motivated because this process of getting what you want will knock you down sometimes but you need to be able to get back up and keep your eyes on the prize.”
Language barrier is no obstacle for determined students

Bilingual became the valedictorian

By Mizan Chowdhury

Shereen Murrah smiles. Having a childhood in Palestine, Shereen knows how education is in the U.S. compared to her country where they had long school hours and tons of memorizing.

Shereen Murrah, the valedictorian of the The School of Business, Technology, Marketing and Finance class of 2015 accomplished many things as a bilingual student.

Murrah started her high school life as an ordinary freshman in BTMF but soon she found herself competing with others for the top.

Although she had always been a bright student, success doesn’t always depend on one’s talent; it depends on the hard work. She always put pressure and pushed herself to the next level which she thinks is the reason for her success.

“My parents never completed high school and my older brothers never took studies seriously,” said Murrah. However, all of them wanted her to achieve higher education.

“During high school, I have put a substantial effort into my work and as a result I have received the Honor Roll every year,” said Murrah. Now, when she remembers those days and looks to her transcript, she feels all her efforts haven’t been in vain.

Murrah was accepted into Drew, FDU, MSU, Saint Peters, WPU, Caldwell, NJIT, NYIT, RU and TCNJ and offered scholarships from most of them. Her high GPA, SAT score, high school rank and extra-curricular activities were the reasons behind her success.

Spanish classes help Kean U student

By Saphire Miranda

Miosandrys Rodriguez, 2014 SET graduate, is overcoming the obstacle of learning English and now finds success in college.

Born in New York, but raised in the Dominican Republic, Rodriguez came to Paterson when she was 14.

Learning English was a significant hurdle. She started high school in a bilingual program in New York and continued when she came to SET. She exited the program junior year.

She improved her vocabulary in Spanish in high school, but was determined to learn English. “I was forced to speak English to my teachers. I read books and watched TV in English which helped me a lot," she said.

As a freshman at Kean University, she took three classes in Spanish - math, psychology and political science. “These classes helped me with my transition between high school and college. When I took my first class in English I wasn't as nervous as I was during my first semester. I was more prepared,” Rodriguez said.

Although she is not an “expert” in English, she said, “I'm fluent; I'm still learning.” Now a sophomore, Rodriguez is taking courses in English, as well as a class in her Spanish education major, advanced Spanish composition. But her first year with Spanish courses helped set a foundation.

“Those classes helped me in many ways. I have a lot of friends, and it doesn’t matter what language they speak I can communicate with them. Also, job opportunities... it is very important to be bilingual.”

A successful journey at Rosa L. Parks High School leads to college

By Na' eem McNeil

Joana Mendez knew she wanted success from the time she walked into the Rosa L. Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts.

“I walked into high school excited but afraid, with a small idea of who I was. In my head, I was a girl (with a very thick accent), who was chasing my family’s American dream. All I knew was that I had to graduate high school and go off to college,” said the 2015 graduate.

“Nobody explained to me the obstacles I had to overcome along the way. Family tragedies, emotional breakdowns, health complications, and doubting my ability to succeed. In reality, that was just a way for me to unearth another layer of the kind of person that I am,” said.

Having grown mentally and become prepared for the next battle, Mendez attends Ramapo College of New Jersey prepared to achieve the American dream and turn it into a reality. As she said, “All it takes is perseverance, confidence, strength, and the belief that obstacles can be overcome along the way. Just like I did.”

With her eye on the prize of graduation, Zena Toro began a special journey on Sept. 6, 2011 when she was a freshman at Rosa Parks. “I began a journey, a journey which carried challenges, disagreements, tears, joy, memories and most of all happiness. As I began my high school journey I thought it would be easy, but that was an understatement. As days, months, and years passed by, challenges became more difficult. Juggling school, work, church and a social life was all very hard,” she said.

Working through obstacles, Toro reflected on the joy of success. “Through these past four years I have cried so many tears of sadness, stress, but most of all, joy. Fighting all the battles with people doubting me, saying that I will never make it or that I couldn't make it took me to another level where I realized that they are all wrong and I am better than that.” A student of great perseverance, Toro said, “I realized that I CAN, I WILL, and that I MUST graduate.” After graduating in 2015, Toro planned to move to Florida to attend Valencia College in Orlando and become a District Attorney.
Our Next Hurdle