

Getting Your Homeschool Student into College

Dr. Kuni Beasley

Is your child prepared for college? Did you start planning and preparing early on, or have you waited until the last minute—eleventh and twelfth grade? Unless you have the acceptance letter in hand, then it is Dr. Beasley to the rescue.

Imagine a student with a GPA (grade point average) less than 3.0 but with mid-to high 1500 SAT scores (old scoring system). How well do you think this student did? He graduated high school at 16 and received ten scholarship offers and a West Point appointment. He went on to serve seven years with the US Army, retiring as a major in the reserves, received a BS from Texas Christian, an MBA from Oklahoma City University, a Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Texas, Arlington. With all this college—22 years—he paid for only one semester! How did he do it? That's what Dr. Beasley wants to share with your family in *College 101*.

Not only did Dr. Beasley go to college, but he was a college professor for 18 years. He learned the process and packaging that gets college and university administrators' attention. Though homeschoolers many times rise above their public and private school peers academically, homeschool diplomas and transcripts don't have the look of traditional school diplomas and are often put at the bottom of the pile to go over later, and later never comes. You need a strategy that gets your child noticed. And then there's preparation—is your child prepared to take long, exhaustive tests, pore through mountains of material, and write extensively at the college level? Your child can use the same techniques Dr. Beasley used himself and has taught to hundreds of students.

Let's start with your college strategy for your student.

Community College

The community college strategy is known as a “2 + 2” strategy: 2 years in junior/community college and 2 years at a four-year college. The “2 + 2” is becoming more and more popular because it provides several advantages:

- **Class Size**—Many large state universities present their freshman and sophomore classes in large lecture halls with 200-500 students, with professors who would rather be teaching upper division classes. Two-year colleges will usually have smaller classes with professors more focused on teaching students.
- **Value**—Community colleges are the best college value in America. They are usually very low cost. Many even offer reduced tuition for concurrent enrollment while in high school; some even provide free tuition. In addition, they have the mandate and resources dedicated to help students fill in any academic gaps they have.

- **Maturity**—Many parents would prefer to have their children closer to home the first year or so of college to allow them time to transition and mature a few more years.
- **General Courses**—The student does not have to commit to a major as soon. Students can take the general requirements and take courses in different subjects in order to explore different areas.
- **College Credit**—Most two-year colleges are more liberal in accepting tests for college credit (CLEP, DANTEs, etc.).
- **Scholarships**—Many four-year colleges are reserving more and more scholarships for students coming out of two-year colleges.

Four-Year College

Many students seek to enter four-year colleges right out of high school. The United States has the most eclectic mix of public and private colleges and universities in the world. Finding the right one might be difficult. Getting in once you have found one might be even more difficult. Things to consider when looking at four-year colleges include the following:

- **Navigating**—Thousands of colleges are out there. It is a major task to sift through them. Huge reference books are published each year along with several software products that help sort through the data. However, most people need help from someone who knows how to navigate the information.
- **Size**—the bigger the college, the more resources, opportunities, and mix of majors it offers. But bigger might also mean your student is just another number on the roster.
- **Cost**—State colleges usually cost less than private colleges for in-state tuition, yet most private colleges work harder to get you scholarships and financial aid.
- **Major**—Most large colleges have the standard range of the most popular majors, plus a few specialty majors. Smaller colleges tend to focus on liberal arts, business, or a specialty area.
- **Little-Known Colleges**—Hundreds of excellent small colleges don't play in the Rose Bowl and don't have a large recruiting budget. We call these our "Hidden Secret Colleges."

Competitive College

Most large "flagship" state colleges are joining the ranks of top-level private colleges by getting more selective with admissions. Things to consider when dealing with competitive colleges include the following:

- **Packaging**—The student has to be “packaged” with all the proper forms, letters, and documentation to compete with top students across the country and across the state. Most high school counselors know how to prepare and package a student for competition, but few parents do; so seek help.
- **Start Early**—The college search should take place during the spring of the junior year. The college should be selected over the summer, and applications should be sent out the day after Labor Day of the student’s senior year.
- **Service Academies**—West Point, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and other service academies require “special” packaging. Most people don’t know where to start.

Scholarship Competition

Seeking and obtaining scholarships is difficult to almost impossible to those who don’t know how to do it . . . and easy for those who do know. Believe it or not, scholarships are more a function of positioning and packaging the student than they are of good grades and high SAT scores (which are still important).

- **Packaging, again**—Every year, well packaged “B” students get big scholarships while many “A” students get what’s left over.
- **Start Early**—Scholarships are usually decided by December of the senior year.
- **Athletic Scholarships**—In many cases, even an average athlete can get an athletic scholarship. Often overlooked are smaller colleges and junior colleges that have fine athletic programs but don’t have a large recruiting budget. Even colleges that do not give “athletic” scholarships are known to give a good athlete an “academic” scholarship to attend.

Once this decision is made, pre-college preparation in reading, study, testing, and writing skills should begin. College or university selection, application, financing and enrollment will soon become an issue. Are AP tests better than CLEPs? Learn what 2,800 college and universities have to say. Which colleges are “looking” for students? Let Dr. Beasley answer these and many other questions about college in his *College 101 Guide*, FREE to TOS readers. Just send us an email at gatewayprep@yahoo.com with your name, city, and state, and you will receive Dr. Beasley’s 15-page *College 101 Guide* FREE via return email.

Biographical Information

Copyright, 2009. All rights reserved by author below. Content provided by [The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC](#).

Dr. Kuni Beasley is the founder and Dean of Gateway Preparatory School, a private school in Texas established as a nonprofit corporation providing educational services in resident and distance education. Gateway students can earn a traditional high school diploma—Tier 1—or advanced students can accelerate through high school and pursue an accelerated college curriculum. For more information, visit our website at www.gatewayprep.com or write us at gatewayprep@yahoo.com. Be sure to let us know you read about us in The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine.