The Journey Begins Now

With all the financial aid forms, teacher recommendations, and the vast array of colleges out there, many students don’t know how to start the daunting process of applying to a four-year university. Clicking on www.firstinthefamily.org/checklist/ can help. Students can download “planning checklists,” which detail what goals and objectives college-bound students should achieve each year, from 9th through 12th grade. For instance, the ninth-grade checklist (part of which is shown below left) suggests students let their teachers know they plan to go to college and make sure their courses are considered “college prep” by checking with their guidance counselor. The list encourages students to read as much as they can to become better thinkers and to get involved in activities they care about in or after school. It also recommends that ninth-graders begin to research colleges that match their interests. The 11th-grade checklist (part of which is shown below right) includes reminders such as checking test schedules for the PSAT, SAT, or ACT and offers additional tools like the College Board’s “My Organizer.” The checklist also features a valuable tip: If students can’t afford to pay the fees for tests like the SAT or ACT, they should ask their counselor to help them apply for a waiver, so they can still take the test.

—EDITORS