

October 2020

Dear ACPS Students, Families, and Alumni,

Thank you for signing up for the SFA monthly scholarship newsletter! The Scholarship Fund is ready and available to help TCW students and families with the college admissions and financial aid planning process.

The Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce the hiring of Ms. Alyssa Samuel as the Director of College Advising. Ms. Samuel can be reached at college@acps.k12.va.us or her Google Voice number, 703-705-2464.

Mr. Waters and Ms. Harrington continue to serve as SFA College Advisors. Mr. Waters can be reached at darien.waters@acps.k12.va.us or his Google Voice number, 703-688-2670. Ms. Harrington can be reached at Melissa.harrington@acps.k12.va.us or her Google Voice number, 571-409-6186.

SENIORS:

- **Confused or overwhelmed about the College Admissions and Financial Aid process-** please reach out to the Scholarship Fund College Advisors, your TC Counselor or Ms. Morris, in the TC College and Career Center. There are many people ready and willing to help you. If you need help with ANY of the below steps call, text or email us! ***You don't have to do this alone!***
 - **Admissions Process-** *For a detailed list please see the TC Senior College Planning Checklist, go to TC Student Resources, then School Counseling/TCW School Counseling Resource Page and then College Application Resources/College Application Tools*
 - Create a list of reach, target and safety schools- decide how you will be applying to these schools (Common App, Black Common App, Coalition App, directly to the school) AND when you will be applying (Early Decision, Restricted Early Action, Early Action, Regular Decision)
 - Create a calendar or timeline showing the deadlines for each of your applications
 - Fill out the general portion of the Common App (even if you are not applying to a Common App school), add one school to Common App and complete the FERPA waiver (in Common App) and then match your Naviance and Common App accounts
 - Request letters of recommendation
 - Write essays (personal essay/statement AND look to see if the colleges you are applying to have supplemental essays)
 - Need an application fee waiver? Reach out to us, your counselor or Ms. Morris for more details.

- Fill out “Green Go Packet” Student AND Parent info forms for your school counselor-must be completed 15 days before your first college application is due
 - **Financial Aid Process**
 - Create an FSA ID-every student needs an FSA ID. One parent for each student, if parent is eligible, needs an FSA ID.
 - Complete the FAFSA-see below for more details
 - The FAFSA can be corrected...if you think you made a mistake contact an SFA College Advisor. We can help!
 - Complete the SFA Scholarship Application-see below for more details
 - Complete the CSS Profile-if your college requires it-see below for more info
 - Complete Financial Aid Verification-this step happens once you have been admitted to a college AND the college has received your FAFSA. This is when the college verifies the info on your FAFSA so that they can create your Financial Aid Award.
 - Review Financial Aid Award letters-review financial aid offers to determine which college is offering the best financial aid package and to help you choose which college you will attend.
- **Missed TC's Senior College Planning Meeting on September 21th?** A recording of the presentation and the power point presentation are available on the TCW School Counseling Canvas page-“TCW School Counseling Resource Center”, then go to “Counseling Events and Videos”
 - Remember to link your CA and Naviance accounts.
 - Naviance is the link between you, your TCW counselor and your colleges. Every college you are applying to, even if it is not a Common App school, should be in Naviance.
- **Be sure to check whether your colleges have Priority Scholarship Deadlines!** Many schools require you to have your application turned in early in order to be considered for merit-based scholarships. For example GMU's priority scholarship deadline is November 1st and VCU's is November 15th! If you are a good candidate for merit scholarships at your colleges, make sure you don't miss those deadlines!
- **Early Action/Early Decision/Regular Decision:** Do you know how and when you will be applying to each of your schools? This information is essential for creating a timeline and keeping you on track.
 - Some applications deadlines are as early as **October 15th** so be sure to get started on your application ASAP if you are planning to apply Early Decision or Early Action.
 - Early Action (EA): Accepted students are **not** required to attend EA college
 - Early Decision (ED): Accepted students **are required** to attend ED college and withdraw all other college applications. Because ED is binding, it is important

that students with financial need apply ONLY to colleges that guarantee to meet 100% of the student's financial need ([please see this list of colleges that guarantee to meet 100% of financial need](#)).

- **Save the date for the Scholarship Fund's FAFSA Workshops** Every senior should fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) -- a free, application to qualify for money from the federal government, the state of Virginia, and colleges.
 - FAFSA is an application that allows you to qualify for scholarships/grants, work-study, and loans.
 - The 2021-2022 FAFSA went live October 1.
 - The 2021-2022 FAFSA determines financial aid for fall 2021, spring 2022 and summer 2022.
 - The 2021-2022 FAFSA is based on 2019 income tax returns.
 - **SFA will be offering virtual FAFSA workshops this year. Registration is required for all workshops.** Interpretation will be available in Spanish, Arabic and Amharic.
 - **[FAFSA Step 1 Workshops-Create an FSA ID](#)**
 - September 30 and Oct 5
 - If you were not able to attend the Create an FSA ID workshop you can access the presentation from the workshop [here](#).
 - If you need assistance creating your FSA ID, please sign up for a one-on-one Zoom meeting with an SFA Advisor [here](#).
 - **[FAFSA Step 2 Workshops-Complete the Application \(FAFSA\)](#)**
 - October 8, 3:30-[register here](#)
 - October 14, 3:30-[register here](#)
 - October 19, 11:00-[register here](#)
- **Why complete the FAFSA?**
 - Seniors who complete the FAFSA are 63% more likely to enroll in college
 - The FAFSA does NOT obligate you to take out loans to pay for college.
 - The application does NOT include essays and does NOT consider your grades
 - Most families receiving free/reduced lunch will qualify for \$6,435 in free money from the federal government (the Pell Grant). However, even if a family does not receive free or reduced lunch, they may receive some funding through the FAFSA (from the Commonwealth of VA or the student's college)
 - **Many colleges award financial aid first come, first served**
 - **Many private scholarships require a FAFSA as part of their application**
- **Preparing for the FAFSA**
 - Who is eligible to complete the FAFSA? *Answer-Citizens AND [Eligible Non-Citizens](#)*
 - [Documents needed](#) to complete the FAFSA
 - Am I a [dependent or independent student](#) on the FAFSA?
 - Who is [my parent](#) on the FAFSA?

- Everyone who can, should use the [IRS Data Retrieval Tool](#) to complete their FAFSA. [Steps to use IRS DRT](#).
 - If you need more info about a FAFSA Question-Select the blue and white question mark icon next to a FAFSA question to view a "tool tip" that provides information about how to answer that question.
 - In the online FAFSA form, the tool tip may have a "More Help" link for additional information. You also can select the "Help" button at the bottom of the tool tip to reach the "[FAFSA Help](#)" page, where you can browse FAQs, search for more information, or click on "Contact Us."
 - Under "Contact Us" -Chat (available in English and Spanish) is quicker and more efficient than email and phone.

- **CSS Profile is another financial aid application required by SOME schools.** Many competitive institutions and schools that provide 100% of financial need require the CSS Profile.
 - [Schools that require the CSS Profile for 2021-2022](#)
 - [CSS Profile Student Guide](#)

- **Save the date for the release of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria application on Friday, November 1st.** - The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria awarded over a million dollars last year to TCW students **ONLY**.
 - To learn more about the [SFA first time applicant process](#), please go [here](#).

- **Common FAFSA mistakes & questions!** If you have questions about how to fill out your FAFSA please reach out to a Scholarship Fund of Alexandria College Advisor.
 - Every eligible senior should complete the FAFSA-fill it out now to keep ALL your options open!
 - Choose the correct FAFSA-TCW 2021 grads should be filling out the 2021-2022 FAFSA
 - Use the correct tax return! The 2021-2022 FAFSA uses the 2019 income tax return.
 - If eligible, USE the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT), it simplifies the FAFSA and the financial aid verification process.
 - **Work-Study:** ALWAYS check "yes" you are interested in being considered for work-study. You can decide you don't want to apply for a work-study job once you get to campus. It's harder to go back and request work-study funds once they've already been awarded to other students.
 - **High School Selection:** first press "search" and locate the official "TC WILLIAMS HIGH". The school should show up in ALL CAPS.
 - **College Selection:** You can list up to 10 colleges on the FAFSA. Include any school you are even considering applying to. Consider adding NOVA (003727). You can always go back into your FAFSA later and add more schools.
 - A few confusing questions:
 - Am I pursuing a graduate/professional degree? [Answer-No](#)

- What will your college grade level be when you begin the 2021-2022 school year? *Answer-Never attended college/1st year (EVEN IF YOU HAVE TAKEN A DE CLASS IN HIGH SCHOOL)*
- What degree or certificate will you be working on when you begin the 2021-2022 school year? *Answer-1st Bachelor's Degree OR 1st Associates Degree*
- Will you have your first bachelor's degree before you begin the 2021-2021 school year? *Answer-No*
- At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, or graduate certificate, etc.)? *Answer-No*
- **Do I have to answer questions about my parents on the FAFSA or can I just include my own information?**
 - If you cannot answer “**yes**” to one of the “dependency status” questions (see above link “Am I a dependent or independent student”) then you are REQUIRED to provide parental financial information on the FAFSA.
- **Who is considered my parent when I complete the FAFSA? See above link “who is my parent on the FAFSA”**
 - Sometimes the person you would consider to be mom or dad is NOT considered your parent by the FAFSA. You must abide by the FAFSA’s definition of legal parent.
 - ***Grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older brothers or sisters, widowed stepparents, and aunts and uncles are not considered parents*** unless they have legally adopted you or have legal guardianship. Legal guardianship is different than custody.
 - **If legal parents are living together**, regardless of whether or not they are married, you will provide parental information for both.
 - **If legal parents are not living together (because they are divorced, separated, widowed, or were never married)**, you must provide information from the parent who you lived with most during the 12 months prior to filing the FAFSA
 - If you lived with both parents an equal amount of time, choose the parent who provided more financial support for you during the last 12 months.
 - If you did not live with either parent during the 12 months prior to filing the FAFSA, choose the parent who provided more financial support for you during the last 12 months.
 - If you did not live with either parent during the 12 months prior to filing the FAFSA and neither parent provided financial support for you during the last 12 months, choose the parent who last provided financial support for you.

- The parent whose information you provide is called the “custodial parent”.
 - ***If the custodial parent is remarried, you must also provide information from your stepparent***, even if the stepparent is not planning to contribute toward your college education.
- **What if I don’t live with my parents?**
 - You still must answer the questions about them if you’re considered a dependent student.
 - We can work with you to call them and ask them to send pictures of tax documents, etc.
 - You will count yourself as part of your parents’ household (in addition to any of your parents’ children who either live with your parents or who are financially supported by your parents).
- **What if I my parents live in a foreign country?**
 - You still must answer the questions about them if you’re considered a dependent student.
 - You will select “foreign country” as your parents’ state of legal residence
 - If your parents file taxes in a foreign country, you will answer that they “Already completed” their tax return and “yes” they did file a Puerto Rican or foreign tax return for 2018
 - Then select “foreign tax return” for type of income tax return filed and estimate what your parents Adjusted Gross Income and wages for 2019 would have been in US Dollars.
 - Your college will likely request a copy of your parents’ foreign tax return.
 - If your parents did not file a tax return in a foreign country, you will answer that they are “Not going to file”
 - Then estimate what your parents’ wages for 2019 would have been in US Dollars.
 - Your college will likely request a letter from your parents’ employer, copies of receipts or pay stubs, or some other type of documentation showing your parents’ income.
- **What if my parents aren’t going to help me pay for college and refuse to provide information for my FAFSA?**
 - You can’t be considered independent of your parents just because they refuse to help you with this process. If you do not provide their information on the FAFSA, the application will be considered “rejected,” and you might not be able to receive any federal student aid.

- If you need assistance speaking with your parents about the importance of completing the FAFSA, please see your Counselor or someone in the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria or College and Career Center who can help!
- **What if I have no contact with my parents?**
 - If you don't know where your parents live, or you've left home due to an abusive situation, fill out the FAFSA without parental information and then reach out to SFA college advisor- we will help you get in touch with the financial aid office at the college or career school you plan to attend.
 - The financial aid administrator will tell you what to do next. Don't put this off or you might miss financial aid deadlines!
- **What if my parents are undocumented?**
 - **If you the student are a US citizen OR eligible non-citizen, you are still able to fill out the FAFSA even if your parents are undocumented. Simply enter all zeros for your parent's social security numbers.**
 - A tax payer identification number (TIN) and employer identification number (EIN) are not the same thing as a social security number.
 - If your parents are filing taxes, submit all financial information as normal.
 - If your parents are not filing taxes, use paystubs to estimate income as best as possible.
 - Your parents will not be able to apply for an FSA ID to sign your FAFSA electronically, so you will have to print out a signature page and mail it in after you have completed your application. This will delay the processing of your application slightly.
- **Who is considered part of my household?**
 - Yourself, the person(s) considered your custodial parent(s) for the purposes of the FAFSA, and your custodial parent(s) other children if:
 - Your parent(s) provide more than 50% of their financial support, or
 - They would also answer "no" to all dependency questions on the FAFSA (even if they do not live with you or your parent(s))
 - Other people IF, they live with your custodial parent(s) AND your parent(s) provide more than 50% of their financial support

ALUMNI:

- **Complete the 2021-2022 FAFSA. The 21-22 FAFSA opened up October 1.**

- Even though you have already applied and received your financial aid for this year (fall 2020, spring 2021 and summer 2021) you MUST complete the 2021-

2022 FAFSA in order to receive financial aid for next year-fall 2021, spring 2022 and summer 2022.

- Some state and college aid are first-come, first-served, so it is important you complete the 2021-2022 FAFSA ASAP
- You will use 2019 income tax returns for the 2021-2022 FAFSA
- If you need assistance please contact any of the SFA College Advisors

Current Events & Data-Higher Education, College Admissions and Financial Aid:

- **How will testing and new test optional and test blind policies impact MERIT aid from colleges and universities?** <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/25/your-money/merit-aid-SAT-optional.html>
- **What role does predictive analytics play in college admissions and what is demonstrated interest?** <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-admissions-algorithms-could-affect-your-college-acceptance>
- **Sallie Mae's Annual Report-How American Pays for College, 2020**
- **Trying to find common data that allows you to compare institutions? [Common Data Set Initiative \(CDS\)](#)**- is a collaborative effort among data providers in the higher education community and publishers as represented by the College Board, Peterson's, and US News & World Report. The goal is to improve the quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved in a student's transition into higher education, and reduce the reporting burden on data providers.
 - Google "CDS" or "common data set" and the school name to find the data. Not all schools publish the CDS, but a vast majority do.

Below is a list of upcoming scholarships. Local scholarships are indicated by pink text.

OCTOBER

1. [National Young Arts Foundation](#) - October 16, 2020 - Open to students ages 15-18 who excel in cinematic arts, dance, theater, music, writing, or visual arts. Cash awards up to \$10,000 and master classes with world-renowned artists
2. [Olin Teague Aerospace Scholarship](#) - October 12, 2020 - \$4,000 scholarship open to high school seniors pursuing a career in aerospace fields
3. [American Muscle Student Scholarship](#) - October 15, 2020 - \$2,500 scholarship open to high school seniors and current college students pursuing an automotive themed major
4. [Coca-Cola Scholarship](#) – October 31, 2020 – \$20,000 scholarship open to current high school seniors with 3.0+ GPA (unweighted) and a demonstrated capacity to lead and serve
5. [Zombie Scholarship](#) - October 31, 2020 - \$2,000 essay scholarship open to students 14 years of age or older; 250 word essay on surviving a zombie apocalypse

6. [AACN Polly Bednash Nursing Scholarship](#) - October 31, 2020 - \$5,000 scholarship open to students with a 3.2+ GPA who are currently enrolled in a BA nursing program at an [AACN member institution](#)
7. [Voice of Democracy Scholarship](#) - October 31, 2020 - \$30,000 essay contest on "Is This The Country The Founders Envisioned " open to students in grades 9-12
8. [Horatio Alger Scholarship](#) - October 26, 2020 - \$10,000 scholarship open to high school seniors with a G.P.A. of 2.0 or higher who have overcome adversity and have participated in community service and who display integrity and perseverance; family income must be under \$55,000
9. [Scholarship America Dream Award](#) – October 15, 2020- \$5,000-15,000 renewable scholarships open to current college freshmen with 3.0+ GPA, **open to DACA students**
10. [Comcast/NBC Universal Scholarship](#) - September 5, 2019 - \$5,000 scholarship open to current college sophomores and juniors with 3.0+ GPA studying at an HBCU and planning to pursue a career in entertainment/media
11. [Horatio Alger National Scholarship](#) - October 26, 2020 - \$25,000 scholarship open to high school seniors who have participated in community service and who display integrity and perseverance; family income must be under \$55,000
12. [Wendy's High School Heisman](#) – Opens October 1, 2020 closes October 29, 2020 - \$10,000 scholarship open to seniors who are student athletes, leaders in their school community, and who have a 3.0+ GPA
13. [PEO Star Scholarship](#) – Chapter Recommendation due by October 15, 2020 and applicants have 30 days after receiving the application to complete it - **\$2,500 scholarship open to female rising high school seniors with 3.0+ GPA who exhibit leadership and community service. Must be nominated by local P.E.O. chapter to apply - please email Ms. Feldman at margaret.feldman@acps.k12.va.us if you are interested in being nominated!**
14. [Scholarships4Moms](#) – October 15, 2020 - \$10,000 scholarship drawing for moms who are current college students
15. [AES Engineering Scholarship](#) – October 5, 2020 - \$500 essay contest for high school seniors
16. [Horatio Alger National Scholarship](#) - October 25, 2020 - \$25,000 scholarship open to high school seniors who have participated in community service and who display integrity and perseverance; family income must be under \$55,000
17. [NSLI-Y](#) - November 5, 2020 - Merit-based scholarship for high school students and recent high school graduates to participate in summer or academic year language immersion programs in countries where the 8 NSLI-Y languages are spoken (Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Persian, Russian, and Turkish)
18. [Jack Kent Cooke College Scholarship](#) - October 30, 2020 - \$40,000 per year renewable scholarship open to high school seniors with 3.5+ GPA, 1200+ on SAT, or 26+ on ACT. Applicants must participate in community service and exhibit financial need
19. [Scholarship America Dream Award](#) - October 15, 2020 - \$5,000-15,000 renewable scholarships open to current college freshmen with 3.0+ GPA, **open to DACA students**

20. [Wendy's High School Heisman](#) - October 20, 2020 - \$500-5,000 scholarship open to seniors who are student athletes, leaders in their school community, and who have a 3.0+ GPA

November

1. [VMFA Scholarship](#) - November 6, 2020 - \$4,000 arts scholarships for Virginia high school and college student
2. [Prudential Spirit of Community Award](#) - November 10, 2020 - \$5,000 scholarship open to any student in grades 5 - 12 who has participated in community service in the last year
3. [Most Valuable Student Scholarship](#) - November 15, 2020 - Scholarships range from \$1000 - \$12,500. Eligible for high school seniors who are U.S. citizens
4. [Regeneron Science Talent Search](#) - November 12, 2020 - Science research competition for high school seniors; awards up to \$250,000
5. [Zumper Scholarship](#) - November 15, 2020 - \$1,000 essay scholarship open to high school seniors and current college students
6. [Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards](#) - November 15, 2020 - \$16,000 scholarship open to women who provide primary financial support to themselves and their dependents and face economic and personal hardships
7. [James Allen Cox Foundation for Photojournalists](#) - November 15, 2020 - Digital cameras awarded to current high school students and \$2,500 scholarships awarded to current college students submitting still photographs or videos
8. [TigerChef Culinary Arts Scholarship](#) - November 15, 2020 - \$1,000 scholarship for current college students studying culinary arts
9. [Bachus and Schanker](#) - November 30, 2020 - \$2,000 essay scholarship about the importance of the 7th Amendment; open to high school seniors and current college students with 3.0+ GPA
10. [Smithsonian Photo Contest](#) - November 30, 2020 - \$2,500 photo contest open to students 18 or older
11. [UNIGO Education Matters](#) - November 30, 2020 - \$5,000 scholarship for students age 13 or older; 250 word essay on why education matters

Monthly Scholarship Drawings

- [\\$2,000 No Essay Scholarship](#)
- [\\$1,000 Cappex Easy Money Scholarship](#)

Other Ways to Search for Scholarships

- **Naviance Scholarship Search**- go to the Colleges tab and click on Scholarship List or National Scholarship List and you will see different ways to search and view scholarships. The process is a bit clunky.
- **On-line scholarship search engines.** You should never PAY to search for scholarships. Be wary of any site that requires payment or collects data. If you don't know if a scholarship is legitimate please reach out to a SFA College Advisor. Here is a recent article about how to determine if a scholarship or scholarship search engine are legitimate and safe: <https://www.safety.com/scholarship-safety/>

Congratulations on making it through the first month of virtual school. Please feel free to contact SFA College Advisors with any questions! We are always happy to help with:

- Scholarships and financial aid
- Finding a good college fit
- Writing college and scholarship essays
- SAT/ACT preparation
- Building a résumé
- Financial aid options for undocumented students
- Completing the Scholarship Fund Application

Ms. Harrington