

## TWO YEAR COLLEGE OPTION

Community colleges are public two-year institutions that provide excellent opportunities for students. Community colleges have an open door admissions policy (admissions open to individuals with a high school diploma or GED) and provide access to higher education for millions of Americans. While many community college students attend full time, a large number of students enroll on a part-time basis in order to fulfill employment or family obligations.

### Features of a community college education:

- ◆ Costs significantly less (particularly for state residents) than state or private four year colleges. No expenses for room and board and transportation costs are usually lower.
- ◆ Provides a nurturing, supportive environment for students who need additional assistance before transitioning to a four-year college; can include remediation courses.
- ◆ Offers specialized courses of study where a student can earn a certificate in an intensive training program (e.g. fashion design, automotive technology, food service technology, paralegal studies).
- ◆ Schedules coursework with attention to the varying needs of both part-time and full-time students. Online courses provide an additional option.
- ◆ Provides a multitude of programs and majors leading towards an Associate in Arts or Sciences (A.A. or A.S.) or an Associate in Arts and Science (A.A.S.).
- ◆ Many MN community colleges have transfer agreements with the four-year colleges.
- ◆ Consult a community college counselor for information.

Junior colleges are private and public two-year institutions. Many are independently operated with their own unique admissions policies and often have residential facilities, on-campus activities, and athletics. Many students continue their college education by transferring to a four-year college or university.

### Features of a junior college education:

- ◆ Provides a residential college atmosphere.
- ◆ Provides a nurturing, supportive environment for students who need additional assistance before transitioning to a four-year college; can include remediation courses.
- ◆ Offers an opportunity to live away from home yet pursue a two-year program
- ◆ Provides a multitude of programs and majors leading towards an Associate in Arts or Sciences (A.A. or A.S.) or an Associate in Arts and Science (A.A.S.).

## Transfer Procedures

When a student plans to eventually transfer to a four-year college, it is important for the student to understand the credit transfer requirements of the four-year college. Many two-year colleges have established “articulation agreements” with specific public four-year universities. Articulation agreements clearly describe which credits transfer. Four-year colleges accept transfer credit only from schools formally recognized by a regional, national or professional educational agency. This accreditation signifies that an institution meets or exceeds a minimum level of educational quality.

Transferring to a four-year college from a two-year college requires advance planning and students need to seek advice to develop a plan. What courses does a student need in order to transfer? How far in advance does the student need to apply for transfer? Why might a credit be approved by one four-year school and not by another? How many transfer students apply and how many are accepted? Does the student need a foreign language to transfer? **Students at two-year colleges need to contact the transfer officer in admissions of the four-year colleges to answer the questions and concerns about transferring. Counseling departments at two-year colleges often work with transfer admission offices of four-year colleges to assist students.**

### Steps To Take When Considering a Two Year College:

- ◆ Visit the campus and take a tour. Talk to current students about classes, programs, professors and overall satisfaction with the school.
- ◆ Research programs in advance and find out which programs are the strongest.
- ◆ Ask about the student transfer rate.
- ◆ Inquire about what placement tests are required for admission and when and where they are offered.
- ◆ Visit the financial aid office on campus and research available scholarship opportunities.
- ◆ Inquire about special services if disability or rehabilitative services are needed on campus. Know what documentation is required to receive accommodations.
- ◆ Talk with admission representatives, counselors and career center personnel. Ask questions about specific departments or majors. Inquire about internships and job placement services for current students and alumni.
- ◆ Visit the media center and computer labs.
- ◆ Find out the deadline for applying.
- ◆ Inquire about tuition and fees. Are costs based on credit hour or by course?
- ◆ Read the school catalog before registering for classes.
- ◆ Take advantage of an elective orientation course for beginning college students if one is available.
- ◆ **Register for classes early!** The sooner a student registers, the more likely the student will get the classes with the days, times and professors of their choice.
- ◆ Keep focused and motivated!