

Designing Your Future

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS AT A MICHIGAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY
ADVICE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS
AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PRESIDENTS COUNCIL
STATE UNIVERSITIES OF MICHIGAN

**Central Michigan University
Eastern Michigan University
Ferris State University
Grand Valley State University
Lake Superior State University
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University**

**Northern Michigan University
Oakland University
Saginaw Valley State University
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
University of Michigan-Dearborn
University of Michigan-Flint
Wayne State University
Western Michigan University**

WHAT DO UNIVERSITIES EXPECT OF THE STUDENT?

In considering your potential to be a successful student, each university looks at the courses you took and successfully completed. Your overall grade point average, test scores, special abilities, scholastic and volunteer activities and work experience are also important to universities as they evaluate students who have applied for admission. All things considered, however, the best predictor of college success is the quality and rigor of the courses you take each year in high school.

Although each university has final say in admissions decisions, Michigan's public universities strongly encourage you to follow the program of coursework described in this booklet. Standards and expectations for admission are different for each public university and certain programs may also have special requirements for admission. Whatever your area of interest, you should get detailed information about specific admissions requirements from your school counselor or from the appropriate university admissions office. Remember, too, that it is important to do your best throughout high school, and particularly during your senior year.

While these recommendations apply particularly to the universities listed on the back page of this booklet, if you follow this advice, you'll have a better chance of being admitted to and being successful at the college or university of your choice. Even if you decide not to continue your education immediately after high school, a strong educational background will serve you well in the future. Chances are you will eventually find yourself studying on the job since employers expect their employees to continue to learn while they are working. More and more careers require a degree or additional education and training beyond high school, so think of learning as a life-long commitment.

MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR TIME IN HIGH SCHOOL

Even though your high school graduation may seem to be a long time away, the courses that you take as you begin high school determine the courses that you are ready to take in the following years. Your guidance counselor is a great source of information and can be very helpful to you in making course selections, but always discuss your plans with your parents or guardian. As a university student you should also expect a larger quantity of reading assignments and to generally spend more time on homework, so it is very important that you develop good study habits.

You are strongly encouraged to take college entrance exams, the ACT Assessment or SAT, by late in your junior year. If available at your school, take PLAN (a pre-ACT test) in your sophomore year. It is also good practice to take the PSAT early in your junior year. Your score on the PSAT may be a factor in consideration for some scholarships. It is also important to take the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) when it is offered at your school. In addition to possibly qualifying for a Michigan Merit Award, taking the MEAP also gives you information about areas which may need improvement.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

If you believe you can't afford to go to college, think again. Many federal and state programs are available to help students meet the costs of college. Each year Michigan public universities also commit substantial financial assistance to students. A good deal of aid is based on financial need, but scholarship assistance is also available to students based on their academic achievement in high school and, in some instances, test scores. Every university has an office with well-trained professional staff who will work with you to develop an appropriate financial plan. These offices are the best source for financial aid information, but it is important that you carefully review all materials sent to you and make certain that you promptly respond to university requests for information.

Students who take a challenging curriculum such as the one described in this booklet, score significantly higher on the ACT/SAT than those who take less challenging courses. The Michigan Competitive Scholarship and the Michigan Merit Award Program provide substantial financial support to students who achieve certain scores on the ACT and the Michigan Education Assessment Program, respectively. Additional information on these programs can be found at the following website: <http://www.state.mi.us/education.shtm>

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION FOR SUCCESS

ENGLISH

(4 years strongly recommended)

The ability to read critically and to understand what you read is essential for success in college and in most work situations. This means that you should be able to recognize assumptions, identify the author's intention, and clearly understand the writer's message. While developing these skills, you should become familiar with a wide range of literature and literary forms drawn from a variety of sources and different cultures.

It is as important to be able to express yourself clearly as it is to understand what others have written. You should be able to use standard spelling, grammar, and sentence structure to convey your thoughts and ideas accurately. Courses at colleges and universities require the ability to organize and present information and ideas in written form. The most successful students are those who learn these skills while in high school. This includes collecting and organizing information, preparing an outline, and writing a rough draft. It also includes reorganizing, revising, and editing until the result is a logical sequence of smoothly flowing paragraphs which develop a central thesis leading to a conclusion. Word-processing can be a great tool in preparing written documents, but there is no substitute for mastering basic writing skills.

The ability to speak clearly and concisely so that your ideas and opinions can be understood by others is extremely important. You should also develop your capacity to be a good listener and note taker. Practice and perfect these skills in high school because they will greatly improve your ability to communicate effectively throughout your life.

MATHEMATICS

(4 years strongly recommended)

Math is the language of modern science and technology, and increasingly of business, finance and other professions as well. Colleges and universities place great emphasis on math achievement in admissions decisions because many college majors require higher level math skills. Your ability to pursue your choice of major and eventual career may be restricted if your mathematics competencies are lacking. Students who take less than four years of math in high school often find it necessary to spend valuable time making up deficiencies before they can begin to take courses in their desired majors.

Your high school preparation should include at least three years of math, including intermediate algebra. A fourth year is strongly recommended, preferably in pre-calculus if offered at your school. First-year students at universities often have difficulty with math if they have not had recent experience using math skills. It is strongly

recommended that high school seniors make every effort to enroll in a math course to maintain their familiarity with the subject.

If you have time to take other math courses, do so, especially if you are considering math-oriented careers such as engineering, science, and business. The most useful fifth course for many students would be an introduction to probability and statistics. You can also develop and improve your math skills by taking certain courses that focus on applied math. Credits earned in such courses may count toward admission, depending, of course, on the type of a major you wish to pursue. Again, it is important to consult with your guidance counselor if you have any questions about math courses you plan to take.

BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

(4 years preferred, 3 years strongly recommended, including 1 year of biological science and 1 year of physical science. It is strongly recommended that your science experience include at least 1 year of a laboratory course.)

A good understanding of scientific concepts will help you deal more effectively with everyday life situations, appreciate the role of science and technology in society, and open doors to a number of challenging career options. Where possible, you should take year-long courses in biology, chemistry, and physics, including at least one year of a laboratory course.

If you are considering a career in the health sciences, engineering or technology, it is absolutely essential to have strong preparation in the basic sciences and mathematics. Students who have four years of science will be better prepared to go directly into their chosen field of study.

HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

(4 years preferred, 3 years strongly recommended, to include 1 year of world history and 1 year of American history.)

The study of history helps achieve a greater understanding of how past events influence the present. You will also develop an appreciation for the contributions of people from different races and cultures from both western and non-western civilizations.

As you study the social sciences, you will see how political, economic, and social events and conditions relate to each other. Knowledge of the social sciences will also help you to understand the circumstances that shape important historical events and periods, and contribute to gaining greater insights into the world in which we live.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

(3 years strongly recommended)

Language is the basic means of thought and expression. By studying foreign languages you gain a better understanding of different cultures and the diversity among the peoples

of the world. In an era of global economic, political, and social interdependence, the ability to communicate in a language other than your own is becoming increasingly important.

Foreign travel and language competency are important in many professions as well. Many interesting career opportunities may open to you if you can offer foreign language skills. Universities are placing increased emphasis on demonstrating proficiency in a foreign language as a requirement for graduation, so it is a good idea to get a solid background in a foreign language in high school if it is possible to do so. Foreign language study also helps you understand the structure of the English language, which may be of great benefit to you in improving your writing and speaking skills.

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

(2 years recommended)

Knowledge of and expertise in the areas of fine and performing arts will help you to appreciate the richness of creative expression in many forms. Such knowledge and experience may also help you develop skills you can enjoy all your life, such as learning to play a musical instrument, painting or acting. Intensive training at the high school level, including private study outside of school, is a prerequisite for admissions to many performing arts programs. For detailed information you will want to consult admissions counselors at the university of your choice, and, of course, consult your high school counselor.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

Students entering college are expected to be familiar with a wide array of computer applications, from word processing to internet information retrieval. They are also expected to be information literate; that is, to be able to critically assess the credibility and quality of information that they retrieve. During your high school years try to gain as much experience as possible in the intelligent use of computers for word processing, problem-solving, and data storage and retrieval. Virtually every college major now demands proficiency in the use of the computer, so take advantage of every opportunity your high school has to offer for improving your technological and discrimination skills in information retrieval and assessment.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Advanced Placement:** Take advantage of Advanced Placement (AP) course opportunities your school offers or consider taking AP courses offered by other providers such as the Michigan Virtual University (www.mvu.org) . AP

courses not only provided academic challenge, but can also accelerate your progress in college.

- **Dual Enrollment:** Through a program called “Dual Enrollment,” Michigan school districts will pay for high school students to enroll at a college or university to study material not offered by the district, such as advanced math or a foreign language. This means that high school students can earn college credit and also see what college is like. In order to be eligible for dual enrollment you must take the appropriate MEAP test(s), so check with your guidance counselor for specific details.
- **Applied Courses:** Depending on the college major that you choose, some universities may recognize that you have met certain requirements by taking applied courses. For example, technical education courses may have math or science content comparable to the typical courses in these areas. In such cases, each university decides whether certain applied courses satisfy requirements for admission.
- **College Transition:** College offers you an enormous amount of freedom, with different approaches to instruction, evaluation, and scheduling. You will be challenged to make many independent decisions about using time wisely. Steps can be taken to help make a successful transition to college life, such as talking to students at the schools that interest you, consulting websites for practical information from each university, or visits to campuses to meet students and get a better feel for what life on campus is really like.
- **College Fairs:** You are strongly encouraged to take part in special programs or events that universities sponsor during the year and especially in the summer. Make certain that you and your parents or guardian attend “college fairs” and visit several campuses to become more familiar with the wide range of choices that are available in Michigan and beyond.

IT’S YOUR FUTURE

Make the best use of courses offered by your high school, but remember that simply taking courses, even difficult ones, will not guarantee college admission or work success in the future. What really matters is what you know and can do as a result of your high school experience. Push yourself to excel in all areas as this will help you understand more about your personal strengths and also point out areas of deficiency which may need improvement.

A good education provides a basis for making many important decisions about your future, so take charge and give yourself every chance to be successful in school and the career you eventually choose. By following the advice offered in this booklet, you will learn a great deal about your own abilities and interests. Most importantly, you will be better prepared to be a successful student.

For further information on the requirements described in this booklet, or for specific information about a particular program or university, please contact any of the admissions offices listed here, or the Presidents Council office:

Central Michigan University

Mount Pleasant, MI 48859
(989) 774-3076 / (888) 292-5366
www.cmich.edu

Eastern Michigan University

Ypsilanti, MI 48197
(734) 487-3060 / (800) GO-TO-EMU
www.emich.edu

Ferris State University

Big Rapids, MI 49037
(231) 591-2100 / (800) 4-FERRIS
www.ferris.edu

Grand Valley State University

Allendale, MI 49401
(616) 895-2025 / (800) 748-0246
www.gvsu.edu

Lake Superior State University

Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783
(906) 635-2231 / (888) 800-LSSU
www.lssu.edu

Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 355-8332
www.msu.edu

Michigan Technological University

Houghton, MI 49931
(906) 487-2335 / (888) MTU-1885
www.mtu.edu

Northern Michigan University

Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 227-2650 / (800) 682-9797
www.nmu.edu

Oakland University

Rochester, MI 48309
(248) 370-3360 / (800) OAK-UNIV
www.oakland.edu

Saginaw Valley State University

University Center, MI 48710
(989) 790-4200 / (800) 968-9500
www.svsu.edu

The University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734) 764-7433

www.umich.edu

The University of Michigan-Dearborn

Dearborn, MI 48128

(313) 593-5170

www.umd.umich.edu

The University of Michigan-Flint

Flint, MI 48502

(810) 762-3300

www.flint.umich.edu

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI 48202

(313) 577-7928 / (877) WSU-INFO

www.wayne.edu

Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo, MI 49008

(616) 387-2000 / (800) 400-4968

www.wmich.edu

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