

— ALUMNI & PARENT PANEL DISCUSSIONS —

A panel discussion is a great opportunity for your seniors and their parents to hear about the college experience firsthand – from someone who was recently sitting in the very same chairs! College students generally love talking about their lives on campus, and your students will appreciate the opportunity to hear from their near-peers about what it's like to transition from your high school into college. Parents, especially those who have never been to college themselves, will appreciate the chance to hear about the pitfalls and successes of sending kids onto postsecondary education.

MATERIALS

- 3-5 alumni now in college
- 3-5 parents of alumni now in college
- Copies of Student and Parent Questions, [pages 2-4](#)
- Blank paper/pencils for participants to write their own questions
- Computer/projector to screen video (optional)
- Copies of Financial Aid Deadlines handout, [page 5](#)
- 2 rooms, 1 for students and 1 for parents

AGENDA

Pre-event

- Prepare your panelists by providing them with a copy of the pre-determined questions.
- Remind them that students and parents may have additional questions.
- Share any expectations you have about how they respond to questions about sensitive topics (i.e. students may be interested in learning more about alcohol or sex on campus; students and parents may ask financial questions); generally, we recommend that panelists be honest but not feel compelled to share any information that makes them uncomfortable.

5 minutes

- General Welcome
- Include reminders about FAFSA/ORSAA, OSAC, and Financial Aid
- Show [I Wish I Knew](#) and/or [FAFSA Overview](#) videos (optional)
- Explain format for the evening

40 minutes

- Break into two groups – 1 for parents and 1 for students
- Encourage each participant to write down at least one question they would like to ask of the panelists.
- Collect the questions.
- Shuffle the handwritten questions with the prepared questions, and distribute equally to participants.
- Introduce the panelists – at minimum, they should tell their name, the year they (or their child) graduated from your high school, and the name of the college they (or their child) attend.
- Encourage participants to read out the questions they've been given and have the panelists respond.

10 minutes

- Bring parents and students back to the same room.
- Ask 3 students and 3 parents to each talk about one thing they learned that surprised them.

5 minutes

- Send the participants off with the following Action Steps: 1) Complete and submit the FAFSA/ORSAA if they haven't already; 2) Parents and students should discuss how their family will finance college; 3) Students need to complete any lingering college applications.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT PANELISTS

How do you manage your time and responsibilities?

Have you ever felt like college is too hard? If so, what did you do about it?

Do you live in the dorms, at home, or in your own house or apartment off-campus? What are the pros and cons of each option?

Do you have any advice about talking to your parents about finances?

How are you and your family sharing the financial responsibility for college expenses?

Are you working while you're in college? Is your job on campus or off? What are the benefits or drawbacks of working while in school?

What advice do you have for talking to college administrators, like those in the admissions or financial aid offices?



QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT PANELISTS

What do you wish you had known before college about ...

- studying?
- keeping up your grades senior year?
- accessing support services?
- choosing a major?
- setting your class schedule?

What kinds of student clubs or organizations are you involved in? What kinds of activities do you do with those clubs? Do you have advice about joining them?

Have you been homesick during your first year? How did you get over it?

What do you and your friends do for fun on the weekends?

What is the best way to meet people or make new friends?

What do you miss most about home while you're at school?

QUESTIONS FOR PARENT PANELISTS

How do you respond to your student when they call and say “This is too hard. I don’t like it here. I want to come home.”?

Have you talked with your student about financing college expenses? How did you broach the subject?

How are you and your student sharing the financial responsibility for college?

We know there are costs associated with tuition, fees, room and board, books, etc.; what were some of the unanticipated costs that we should prepare for?

What was the transition like for you and your family when your student left home for college?

What rights do parents have to talk with administrators at the college?

How often (and how) do you communicate with your student? Do you talk on the phone, text, send email?

What happens when your student is sick? How do they get the help they need?

Has your student been homesick during his or her first year? How did you help?

What do you wish you had known before your child left for college?

How involved were you in deciding where your child went to school? What were the primary factors in that decision?



FINANCIAL AID DEADLINES

FAFSA/ORSAA

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID/
OREGON STUDENT AID APPLICATION

The FAFSA is the application to receive federal financial aid. Eligible undocumented students file the ORSAA to be eligible for state financial aid.

fafsa.gov/oregonstudentaid.gov

AS CLOSE TO OCTOBER 1 AS POSSIBLE

FINAL DEADLINE: JUNE 30

OSAC

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCESS & COMPLETION

One application to apply for over 500 scholarships just for Oregon residents.

oregonstudentaid.gov

EARLY BIRD: FEBRUARY 15

REGULAR: MARCH 1

PAYING FOR COLLEGE: QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS

Being prepared for the realities of paying for college is the best way to ensure you're ready to meet the challenge head on. Families who talk about college costs and how to finance education are the most prepared. Start the conversation today! (Use the following questions if you're unsure of how to begin.)

STUDENT TO PARENT:

What is our Expected Family Contribution (EFC)?
(The EFC is used as part of the FAFSA to determine financial aid, use the calculator on BigFuture to find out your family's amount.)

How much will our family be able to contribute for my college education? How many years will this be possible?

What do you expect from me in return?

PARENT TO STUDENT:

What are your plans for helping to pay for college?

How many hours per week are you willing to work while you're in school?

How many scholarships will you commit to applying for?

