



**THE
ISLAND
SCHOLARS
NEWSLETTER**

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**DON'T
FORGET!!**

**The deadline
for the Maine
Islands
Scholarship is
due April 1,
2009!**

Welcome to the third edition of the Island Scholars Parent Newsletter.

This newsletter is part of the Island Scholars Network, which provides different ways for all Maine Island Scholarship recipients and their families to talk and support each other. This is the parents' edition of the newsletter; a separate letter has been sent to your college student's email. The parents' edition will focus on upcoming deadlines and ways to make your student's time in college easier - and (hopefully) yours, too. Please send any feedback, ideas, or subjects you would like to see in the future to Ben Odgren at bodgren@islandinstitute.org.

YOUR FEEDBACK!

Thank you for all of your responses to the surveys. Your thoughts about sending a child off to college, and the college experience in general, were insightful.

I thought I would share a few responses to each of the questions to give you an idea of what other parents had to say. The Island Institute is looking for ways to answer these questions.

What is your biggest concern about students' going away to college?

- Finding the money to send them.
- Readjusting after a semester abroad.
- Finding a church and friends.
- Overcoming comfort zones and adjusting to more expensive ways of living.

Is there another way in which the Island Institute can provide support to address your concerns?

- Connections to additional financial aid.
- Exposing island students to other ways of living (chat rooms, videos, personal visits, etc...)
- Funding a week-long visit in a larger school out of Maine. This program needs to be introduced in elementary schools before kids are too fearful and engrained. An elementary trip, a middle-school trip, and a high-school trip would be great!
- Holding a seminar for scholarship winners prior to their going to college – giving them info on STDs, drinking, and the self-discipline of living on your own.
- Giving individual students connections that would suit their interests and talents.
- One-on-one counseling, covering scholarships and aid options.

Would you attend an on-island evening presentation that explains the ins and outs of financial aid and island-specific scholarships?

- Lots of "Yes!" answers for this question!

Given the current economic climate, do you think a college education is more important or less important now than it was in the past? Why?

- More important. Students may have large loans but they need an education just to get into the job market. Now, unfortunately the jobs are few, money is not there, and students will not feel like they can afford college.
- More, but a cheaper, state-run education can provide decent opportunities. As women, choices without higher education are limited.
- More! A person needs every leg up he or she can get – no matter what vocation someone chooses, a college education can only help!
- The work force is getting very specialized, requiring higher and more developed "skills." A diverse background (island roots combined with 'mainland' know-how) will only strengthen our ability to get better jobs, be it on- or off-island."

-CONTINUED ON BACK-



Do you believe that students are being introduced to colleges and careers at an early enough age? If not, when do you think that should start?

- Sometimes they still don't know what they want to do even after graduating from college.
- Kids should be exposed to colleges and careers at home from birth...I set the expectation: you will go to college.
- They should start looking at careers in 9th grade and there should actually be a class covering types of careers, pay, what they involve, etc..
- No. Broader career and college awareness should start no later than 6th grade so kids can get ideas about what opportunities are out there. We can only model just so many options locally.

Do you have any tips for first-time college parents?

- Make sure children apply for scholarships. Make sure all the paperwork gets sent in by the school.
- Start saving early!
- I always made sure my children knew it was their JOB to study and do well in their classes. It is the parent's job to provide support.
- Do your own homework. College application and process is a full time job for your student and they will need your help. Work together. And don't worry – there is money out there to help you, but it takes work to find it! It gets easier every year.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Let go and let them call you. Let them make their own decisions.
- Your child only needs one school, so don't stress about which colleges will accept him/her. With a plan to apply to a range of schools (all acceptable to the family), you will find a good match.

What have been some challenges your student has experienced in college?

- Being away from home.
- Learning to live with a small budget.
- Not partying too much.
- Adjusting to the work load.
- Adjusting to large classes.
- Time management and setting priorities.
- Apartment renting.
- Picking a major.
- Figuring out if the college they chose was the right fit.
- Going from being a big fish in a little bowl to a little fish in a big bowl.
- Adjusting to higher academic expectations.
- Finding the right college advisor.
- Not procrastinating.
- Getting a "C" on a paper for the first time.
- Dealing with a roommate who is a slob.
- Working and going to school at the same time.
- Learning to ask for help.

How can we help?

Sending a child off to college, for the first time or not, is not a simple thing these days. This newsletter is a good place to compare notes, share ideas, and offer support. We'd like this to be as helpful and informative a newsletter as possible — so please send any feedback, ideas, or subjects you would like to see in the future to bodgren@islandinstitute.org. Thanks for reading!



Benjamin Odgren is the Island Scholar's Network Coordinator at the Island Institute.

He is working at the Island Institute through AmeriCorp: a government-funded national community service organization. He will be creating newsletters, hosting college-awareness programs on the islands, and creating a social network between college-bound islanders.

If you see him on the island, and he looks lost, please help him.