

# Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology College Career Center

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Winter 2012

## College Merit Scholarships: Overview



Most families know about financial need-based aid, which is based largely on family income and assets. Fewer families may be aware of **College Merit Scholarships**, which are awarded without regard to financial need. Only a few of these College Merit Scholarships provide a “full ride,” covering tuition, room & board, and all fees; however, many provide generous financial benefits.

- Awarded by a specific college for use at that school
- Awards range from \$1,000 to over \$250,000 (4 yr. totals)
- Often renewable for 4 years
- Available at many, but not all schools
- Some colleges offer merit scholarships to upperclassmen, often sponsored by specific academic departments
- TJ's College Career Center (CCC) maintains a listing at:

<http://www.tjhsst.edu/supportingtj/careercenter/meritscholar.htm>

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## College Merit Scholarships: Research

### TJ's College Career Center (CCC)

Start with TJ's College Merit Scholarship database:

<http://www.tjhsst.edu/supportingtj/careercenter/meritscholar.htm>

It contains information for scholarships of potential interest to many TJ students, but it is by no means comprehensive as colleges are constantly updating their scholarship offerings. The CCC database should only be used as a starting point.

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### College Web Sites

Current Merit Scholarship information is usually found on a college's web site on the “Financial Aid” page. It can be listed under “Scholarships,” “Merit Awards,” and/or “Admissions.” Sometimes it is in the course catalog or in departmental listings, which may be part of “Academics.” Use the college web site search engine and look carefully.

### College Offices

Some colleges do not provide extensive information about their merit scholarships on their web sites. So, contact the college admissions and financial aid offices directly for more information.

### Publications

Most publications about financing college focus primarily on financial need-based aid, rather than on College Merit Scholarships. Use them to supplement other resources.

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## College Merit Scholarships: Applying

### Most importantly, understand that:

- Applying for merit scholarships requires time and advance planning
- A majority of College Merit Scholarships are awarded well before the regular application deadlines

### Requirements vary greatly from school to school:

- Some College Merit Scholarships require a nomination, some don't
- Some require a separate application and supplemental information, some require nothing more than a regular application
- Some have application deadlines as early as September of the student's senior year, some follow the regular application schedule
- Some scholarship offers are made in the Fall, others are offered later in the Spring as part of the financial aid package

### To avoid missing opportunities:

*Start early, during Junior year and summer before Senior year:*

- Begin researching merit scholarships
- This research may pique your interest in colleges that were not initially on your radar screen
- Organize information for each scholarship
  - Application Procedures
  - Requirements
  - Deadlines

*During Senior Year:*

- Early September of senior year, check the web site for each scholarship AGAIN to make sure that application procedures or requirements have not changed
- Apply for TJ Nominations
  - Some scholarships require a nomination from TJ
  - The number of students that TJ can nominate varies
  - Interested students submit information to the CCC
  - The TJ Scholarship Committee (consisting of one teacher from each TJ Division) decides which TJ student(s) to nominate
  - **The earliest deadlines occur in September**
- Follow Procedural Requirements
  - Requirements vary greatly

### A Sampling of Scholarships which require a TJ Nomination

Boston University  
Trustee Scholars

Davidson College  
Bryan Scholars & Belk Scholars

Duke University  
Robertson Scholars

Emory University  
Emory Scholars & Goizueta Scholars

University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus (UMBC)  
Meyerhoff Scholars

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
Morehead-Cain Scholars & Robertson Scholars

North Carolina State University  
Park Scholars

University of Notre Dame  
Hesburgh-Yusko Scholars

Washington University  
Danforth Scholars

**All of these nomination scholarships have Fall deadlines!**

## Other Scholarship Information

In contrast to College Merit Scholarships, there are two other categories of scholarships:

### General Scholarships

- Typically sponsored by foundations, corporations, civic organizations, and associations
- Can be used at any college
- Awards range from \$25 to over \$50,000, with many in the \$1,000 range
- Typically one-time awards, some are renewable
- TJ's CCC publishes a list which is updated weekly:

[www.tjhsst.edu/supportingtj/careercenter/scholdate.htm](http://www.tjhsst.edu/supportingtj/careercenter/scholdate.htm)

- Paper copies are also available in the College Career Center (room 108)
- It is important to check TJ's CCC listing often and throughout the year, as it is updated weekly
- FCPS Scholarships can be found at Family Connection (on Blackboard)

### National Merit Scholarships

About 150 TJ students annually qualify as National Merit finalists. They are potentially eligible for three types of awards:

- *National Merit \$2500 Scholarships*  
One-time awards
- *Corporate Sponsored Merit Scholarships*  
Varying amounts  
Both one-time and renewable awards
- *College Sponsored Merit Scholarships*  
Many colleges offer \$500 to \$2,000 to finalists who have identified a college as their 1st choice



### **New Financial Aid Tool: Net Price Calculators**

- As of October 2011, every college website is required to include a Net Price Calculator (NPC)
- Estimates “free money” (e.g. merit aid & grants)
- Helps parents, students, and counselors make more informed decisions
- Does not guarantee a package
- Calculations are college specific
- Projects costs for just 1 year, not 4 years
- Use with other info to compare different colleges
- Enter accurate information for a realistic financial aid estimate