Senior Projects

Description

The Senior Project provides an opportunity for 12th grade students to plan and execute an individual venture and experience some of the demands and joys of work and/or the world beyond their usual high school environment. Each senior may undertake a six-week project at the end of their spring semester. The project is elective; students may also decide to remain in their classes through the end of the school year. As an extension of the experiences that students have accumulated in their classes and co-curricular activities over the course of their high school careers, this project calls on them to create and develop goals that call for intense use of their individual talents and resources.

Many students choose to work outside of Park in various service or governmental agencies, schools, hospitals, or business enterprises. Still others choose to develop scholarly interests, researching a particular topic with an expert mentor or to engage in artistic endeavors that go beyond the scope of the courses they've taken at Park.

To develop an individual program of seriousness and quality, preliminary and final proposals are exchanged between students and a faculty review committee over a period of months until a project of mutually agreed-upon intensity and value has been formulated. This process is certainly as important, as is the project itself. The evaluation of each project is based on the student's daily engagement and on a formal presentation at the end of the project. In this presentation given to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors—as well as parents and friends—seniors describe and reflect on their projects, including the expectations, challenges, and rewards.

Notes and Advice

- [Senior Project Timeline and Important Dates](#)

- Extended Senior Projects
  Students who find themselves deeply passionate about an idea for their Senior Project such that they would like to think about increasing the time they devote to it are free to propose an Extended Senior Project, which could start as early as the beginning of the second semester. In this scenario, students might divide their time between the project and their remaining academic commitments (for example, taking courses on their A-B-C days and pursuing an internship on their D-E-F days) or explore other means of beginning the experience before the typical April start date. For such a project to be feasible, planning would almost invariably have to begin in the spring of the junior year.

- Senior Projects are **OPTIONAL.** Some students may decide they would like to remain in their classes, and that is fine.

- Senior Projects take **careful forethought and planning**. The best projects tend not to be those that are thrown together at the last minute. There are many stages to making a project happen, and each takes time, from deciding on an interest, assessing its feasibility, meeting with prospective advisors, etc.

- Students must pass all of their classes and not have exceeded the 20% attendance threshold to go on projects. Projects last for six weeks from April 24th through June 2nd, 2023, for 30-35 hours a week in the Baltimore area. If students are playing a sport or have an **existing** part-time job, they may work 25 hours per week. After sports have ended, students should increase their hours to 30-35.

- Based on past students' experiences, **hands-on projects** tend to be the most successful: those that involve planting, building, teaching, caring for animals, crewing on a boat, etc. Thirty to thirty-five hours a week of filing can get pretty tedious.

- One thing we've heard repeatedly from past students: Senior Projects is a great opportunity to get to know another side of **Baltimore**. The faculty agree, and for that reason, proposals that involve travel are less likely to pass than those that take place locally.

- We really want to urge you to **start early**. It is not a bad idea to do some informational interviewing this fall. The interview is designed to give you insight into what your days would really be like if you were doing a project at this place. Most students who are dissatisfied with their projects felt they did not really know what the project would be like before it started.

- Use connections—your parents' friends, your friends' parents, neighbors, teachers at school, Park alumni and current parents, etc. However, **you cannot work directly with a member of your own family**.

- Dream big! One of the great things about Senior Projects is that it often opens doors to you that would otherwise be closed. It's pretty impossible for a 17 or 18 year old student to get a job at the Mayor's office or a TV station or the Smithsonian, but you can get into those places under the auspices of Senior Projects. To make the most of this opportunity, you should find a project that **goes beyond what's available to you as a summer opportunity**.

- Please do not propose projects that cost money. The faculty feels strongly that Senior Projects **should not be a paid-for experience**. The Senior Project Committee will also give **greater scrutiny** to projects in which:

- ○ Students will be working with other Park seniors
- ○ Independent projects where seniors will **not** be working daily with a project supervisor
- ○ Projects that involve travel
- ○ Projects that involve more than one focus

Key Numbers

6	The number of weeks of your project
25	The number of required hours a week for in-season spring athletes and those who are currently working an after-school job
30-35	The number of required hours a week for a standard project
5	The maximum number of absences (for any reason) in your second semester classes to make sure you meet the 80% attendance threshold

Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Do I want to take this chance to do something I might never have the time or opportunity to do again?
2. Do I want to explore a field of work I'm considering for my own future?
3. Do I thrive best when given structure by others, or can I structure my own time well?
4. Does this project sound like it has *more than enough* to do to fill the time?
5. Do I want to work in person, virtually, or hybrid, and do I do my best work in that mode? (Think about your experience last year in school--if you struggled with virtual learning, we don't recommend you choose a heavily-virtual project.)

Possible Interview Questions

1. What responsibilities would I have here? What contributions could I end up making?
2. Who would I be working under or with on a regular basis?
3. What kind of worker does best here?
4. Would the work be in person, virtual, or hybrid?