



# THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS

MARCH 2019

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 7

## YOUR FINANCIAL AID AWARD EXPLAINED

*(bigfuture.collegeboard.org)*

Your award probably consists of a combination of gift aid, loans and a job. Each of these is very different from the others. Understanding the differences is important. You need to know what you have to do to continue receiving financial aid from year to year, and how your aid might change in future years. Plan your finances now, so you can complete your degree on schedule.

**Gift Aid Is the Best Form of Financial Aid** You don't have to repay it or work for it. Gift aid can be a scholarship, a grant, or other assistance, such as a tuition waiver.

**Loans Must Be Repaid** If your student loan is based on need, it is subsidized. This means you don't have to pay the yearly interest while you're in college. However, after you leave school, your payments include the amount you borrowed plus interest. Unsubsidized loans aren't based on need. These loans require you to make yearly interest payments.

**A Job Is an Opportunity to Earn Money** If your package includes a job, also known as student employment or work-

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## "SENIORITIS" – AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS

*(collegeadmissionsstrategies.com)*

Every year there are hundreds of cocky kids who mistakenly believe their college acceptances are ironclad. Colleges vary tremendously in how they handle a "senior slump." Some give warnings, some place students on academic probation and some actually reverse their decisions. Acceptance letters will usually state that the final acceptance is contingent on consistent performance.

Some students have adopted a very dangerous sense of teenage invulnerability. It usually starts out innocently enough with a missed assignment and then can devilishly detour into a full-blown case of senioritis. Many senior slackers are walking around with a sense of entitlement, "I worked really hard, I did my job, I got accepted to college, now it's my time to take it easy." Not so fast.

Roughly one-third of colleges revoke admissions each year, but most colleges are not likely to do so unless there is a dramatic decline. Senioritis can be expensive, too. Under-performers can lose scholarships and financial aid packages.

It's a cautionary tale and parents, high school administrators and even college admissions officers wish students would take it more seriously. With so many applicants and long waiting lists, colleges may be less willing to gamble on a student who has faltered.

Parents shouldn't ignore any slide in grades or a lack of motivation. Start out by explaining the serious consequences that could occur, and encourage them to follow-through with the same dedication they had when they started their senior year.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGE VISITS

*(collegetransitions.com)*

Parents and students may find themselves considering skipping the annoyances of long car rides or plane trips, days away from work/school, and the slew of hotel bills that come from visiting your teen's prospective colleges. Given the availability of fairly comprehensive virtual excursions, is it still worth the time and expense of a physical trip? We believe that, when feasible, it *is for the following reasons:*

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## PUSHING FOR RADICAL CHANGE IN ADMISSIONS

([insidehighered.com](http://insidehighered.com))

Several Democrats in the U.S. Senate sent out letters to higher education experts asking for ideas on how to narrow racial and ethnic gaps in student debt and access to higher education. One group, New America, is proposing that colleges that have a preference for alumni children lose access to federal aid programs. Ditto for colleges that have early-decision programs. And the group wants to require universities that seek federal research grants to replace admissions systems with ones in which a lottery plays a prominent role (among applicants who have made it over some bar).

New America says it is trying to prompt debate by challenging conventional wisdom about college admissions being meritocratic. Here's what New America has proposed on legacy admissions and early decision: "Historically, the college admissions landscape at highly selective institutions has been sustained by policies that favor the white and wealthy, propping up a status quo that blocks access to low-income students of color. Chief among those policies is the practice of giving preference to legacy students. While race-conscious admissions policies are the constant target of undeserved scrutiny, legacy preference has gone mostly unchallenged legally, to great effect ... Congress should withhold Title IV aid [federal student aid] to those highly resourced and highly selective institutions that engage in legacy admissions and other preferential admissions treatments that overwhelmingly favor wealthy and white families, including early-decision programs."

## *The Importance of College Visits* (continued from page 1)

**Use your senses, including your gut.** For many, college will be life's greatest expense outside of buying a home and should thus be given every bit as much attention. Would you ever consider buying a house, sight-unseen, from an online listing? Just as with a new home, it helps to see, smell, feel, and fully experience a college campus before forking over that tuition money. Equally important will be the gut-sense you get around campus. Have a meal in the cafeteria, sit in on a class, read the student newspaper, and talk with a few current students. Does it feel like it could be home for four years? The only way to answer these questions is to plant your feet on campus and soak it all in.

**Distance is more than an abstract concept.** If you don't visit your prospective colleges then you are missing out on accurately assessing how important distance to family is to you. In the abstract, a school that is 200 miles away isn't that much different than a school that is 2,000 miles away. Actually packing your bags for the opposite coast, waiting for hours in the airport, crossing time zones, experiencing jet lag, and seeing how it feels to be so far from home is an appropriate test that will bring clarity to the geographical parameters of your college search.

**Go on an official and unofficial tour.** It's wise to begin with the official tour offered by your college. While sanitized and sales-pitchy, you'll likely get a good sense of the heart of campus, and of the school's main architectural and social attractions. It will also be a chance to ask your tour guide questions about dorm life, the social scene, and other anecdotal information that is tough to glean from websites and guidebooks.

After the official tour ends, set off on a self-guided tour to make sure the infomercial version of the school appears to align with reality. The more information you can take in, the better, whether of the school-sanctioned or unofficial variety.

**Connect with an admissions officer.** If you are visiting a liberal arts school or a mid-size university, you will likely be able to schedule a one-on-one evaluative interview (for a complete list of colleges that offer interviews [click here](#)). If you are attending a larger university that does not offer a formal one-on-one interview, try to participate in an information session with an admissions official. Either way, you'll want to come prepared to talk about your academic interests and achievements, extracurricular activities, and also have a number of thoughtfully-crafted questions for the admissions officer about their institution.

For those who can't make it to campus, attempt to schedule an [alumni interview](#) at a location near you. Doing so will still afford you the opportunity to humanize your application and make a lasting impression with someone affiliated with the university.



Here is a printer-friendly [Campus Visit Checklist](#) from CollegeBoard.org.

## SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Apply for scholarships
- Save money from part time jobs
- Keep your eyes open for mail or email from college admissions
- Keep your grades up - second semester grades matter!
- Review any financial packages that arrive
- Check college websites for admitted student tour dates

*Your Financial Aid Award Explained  
(continued from page 1)*

study, it means the aid office may help you find a position where you can earn the amount expected. Your earnings are most often used to pay education costs like books and personal expenses.

**Calculate**

Use the [Compare Your Aid Awards](#) tool on CollegeBoard.com to get a side-by-side comparison of your aid awards. You can also save your worksheet or print it out.

## SHOULD I TAKE A GAP YEAR? FOUR REASONS THE ANSWER IS YES

*(blog.prepscholar.com)*

Not excited about the idea of starting another year of school in the fall? What if you could instead take a break from school and spend a year backpacking around Europe, volunteering for a cause you care about, or getting paid to work on a cruise ship? With a gap year all those things possible. Here are a few reasons to take a gap year:

**#1: It Can Boost Your GPA.** Studies of gap year students have shown that people who take a gap year actually get higher grades in college compared to their peers who don't take a gap year. Many students, especially at those at risk of academic burn-out, benefit from taking a year off studying so they can return with more energy and motivation. Planning and carrying out a gap year also often increases your organization skills, maturity, and confidence, all of which can help you do better in school once you return.

**#2: You Can Get Serious Work Experience.** A gap year is often a great way to get experience specifically related to the career you want. Many companies and organizations offer half-year or full-year internships or volunteer positions, but most people can't do them because they are busy with school or work. This means these positions are actually often easier to get than many summer jobs, and since they're longer you'll have the benefit of gaining more experience and making stronger connections with the people you're working with. This can mean better letters of recommendation and useful contacts when you're trying to get a job later on down the line.

**#3: You Can Make Money.** This isn't the case for all gap years, but if you decide to take a job or an internship during your gap year that pays, you could make a significant chunk of change during that year. Even if your job only pays minimum wage, you can still make about \$15,000 in a year if you work full time, and you can put that money toward paying for school or another expense.

**#4: You'll Meet Tons of New People.** No matter what you decide to do during your gap year, you're practically guaranteed to meet new people. Even if you already have great friends, a gap year is an excellent way to meet different kinds of people you wouldn't normally come across. In addition to expanding your social circle, you can even use these new friends as networking contacts if they work in a field you want a job in or know someone who can get you a job.

## WHAT COLLEGE APPLICANTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MOOCs

*(usnews.com)*

Typically massive open online courses are provided at no cost, allowing online learners the opportunity to participate in classes at prestigious schools such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University free of charge. While some of the buzz around these classes has died down in recent years, more than 101 million students enrolled in a MOOC in 2018, with 11,400 courses available from more than 900 universities, according to an analysis by Class Central, a search engine for MOOCs.

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## HOW TO GET INTO TOP COLLEGES: CREATE YOUR STUDENT BRAND

(forbes.com)

Ultimately, top colleges are looking for students who can add value to their image and reputation. Focusing on your student brand early on will allow you to become a high achiever in the areas that interest you most, and express your uniqueness when the time comes to apply to college.

The first step in creating and developing your student brand is to identify your talents and strengths. What qualities or abilities do your teachers, coaches, mentors, classmates, friends and family value most in you? Which academic subjects and extracurricular activities come naturally to you? Take some time to reflect. Make a list of your best abilities, and then interview those around you and compare.

Once you've identified the activities and academic subjects you are uniquely suited to, think about your passions. Often, the things we love doing are those we are naturally good at. Your student brand is equal parts talent and passion, and with a little creativity, you can always find a way to pursue impressive projects at the intersection of the two.

If you're still unsure of how to go about combining your passion and talents, take a look at the table below. It gives examples of activities you can explore at the intersection of your passions and talents.

	Talent 1: Great at debating	Talent 2: Great at Math	Talent 3: Great Writer
Passion 1: Robotics	Start a STEM organization to discuss and teach other kids about science.	Attend math and science competitions; look for scientific or corporate internships.	Start a science journal at your school/a blog/a YouTube Channel; write about science for your local newspaper.
Passion 2: Horseback Riding	Start a non-profit to end horse slaughter and abuse in horseback riding.	Start a hippotherapy organization for people with learning disabilities.	Write a book manuscript on how horseback riding changed your life and can change others' lives too.
Passion 3: Art	Start a non-profit to teach kids and families in underprivileged areas about art.	Do art with math; or write about math in art. Reach out to scholars to work on academic projects.	Submit articles and essays on art in newspapers or other publications; write a novel, inspired by your passion.

Once you've started exploring activities that combine your passion and your talent, you should try to find ways to gain public recognition and scale your activities.

Starting a non-profit is great, but gaining third-party recognition is even better. If your non-profit can garner positive reviews on TV or in newspapers, you can drastically increase your chance of admission to elite colleges. Third-party recognition can take many different forms: publications, newspaper profiles, awards, or TV appearances. Don't be afraid to think big and always keep in mind that scaling up your activities and public recognition add value to your image and ultimately to your college application.

### JUNIOR CHECKLIST

- Set up college campus tours for Spring Break
- [Register for the May 4 SAT test and subject tests](#)  
Deadline to register is Apr. 5
- [Register for the April 13 ACT test.](#) Deadline to register is Mar. 8
- Attend college fairs in your area
- Narrow down your potential college list
- AP test dates are May 6-17. Check with your school coordinator for location.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERS** - A variety of corporate-sponsored scholarships for graduating high school seniors are offered, ranging in value from \$1,000 to \$10,000. All scholarships are contingent upon the applicant's enrollment in an engineering program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Deadline: Mar. 15, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**REGION 18 OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS** (San Diego and Imperial Counties) and the San Diego County School Boards Association offer five \$1,000 scholarships. Applicants are involved in community service and want to pursue a career in education. Deadline: Apr. 15, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**2019 STUDENT-VIEW SCHOLARSHIP** Open to high school seniors regardless of academic achievement or financial need. Awards one individual prize of \$4,000; Two individual prizes of \$1,000; Ten individual prizes of \$500. Simply complete a 15-25 minute online survey about local colleges. You will then be automatically entered into a random drawing for a scholarship award. Deadline: Apr. 22, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**NATIONAL DAIRY SHRINE SCHOLARSHIPS** Offers several scholarships to students who are interested in pursuing careers in agricultural communications, agricultural economics, agricultural education, animal science, dairy or production agriculture and science, food and nutrition. Deadline: Apr. 15, 2018 [Apply here](#)

**BURLINGTON NORTH SANTA FE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP** Offers renewable \$2,500 scholarships to American Indian high school seniors who reside in one of the 13 western states, and plan on studying Business, Mathematics, Natural/Physical Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Education, Medicine or Health Administration. Applicants must be an enrolled member/citizen or a descendant of an enrolled member/citizen. Deadline: Mar. 31, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**MARINE TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIPS** The MTS \$2,000 Student Scholarship for Graduating High School Seniors is open to MTS student members (available for \$25) that are high school seniors. Applicant must be planning to focus on marine technology, marine engineering or marine science. Requires a 500 word essay on interest and plans for marine technology. Deadline: Apr. 18, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**WORLDSTUDIO AIGA SCHOLARSHIPS** Scholarships are awarded in the amount of \$500-\$5000. Open to economically disadvantaged young people. Though not a requirement, minority status is a factor considered in jury decisions. Must be pursuing a degree in one of the design/arts disciplines listed on the website. Requires online uploaded digital images of at least 10 examples of work and a mailed hard copy of the pdf application. Deadline: Received by Apr. 24, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**THE EVALEE C. SCHWARZ CHARITABLE TRUST LOANS** Interest-free Loan Awards of \$5,000 to \$15,000, with a \$60,000 lifetime cap are available to undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional academic performance and financial need. Test scores must be in the top 15% nationwide. You must have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$4,000 or less and attend school in the state in which you reside. Deadline Apr. 10, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP** - Need-based scholarships for eligible children of veterans. Provides up to \$20,000 in aid for undergraduate or post graduate college. Deadline: Apr. 20, 2019 [Apply here](#)

**OPPU ACHIEVERS SCHOLARSHIP** - The OppU Achievers Scholarship celebrates students who transform opportunity into results. The scholarship provides \$2,500 for current or future education costs. Scholarship selections are made four times a year. Deadline: Mar. 31, 2019 [Apply here](#)



RaiseMe has been named to Fast Company's annual list of the World's Most Innovative Companies for 2019. With RaiseMe, Students have the ability to earn "micro-scholarships" from colleges as early as 9th grade, money that they accumulate on the platform as they progress in their path to college and receive directly from an institution upon applying and being accepted. Here's [how it works](#).

### *What College Applicants Need to Know About MOOCs (continued from page 3)*

Jason Ruckert, vice chancellor and chief digital learning officer at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University—Worldwide notes online learners can explore colleges without spending a cent on taking classes. This early introduction, he says, allows students to explore their interests before enrolling. Though unsure of the value a MOOC carries on a college application, Ruckert says taking a course does signal "interest in the particular area of study" to college admissions officials.

Elizabeth Fomin, an instructional consultant senior at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, sees MOOCs as a way for students to test-drive colleges without a campus visit. Those who enroll at a college where they've already taken a course have a head start, she says. While Fomin doesn't see a lot of value in listing a MOOC on a college application, she suggests the courses may be more useful in familiarizing high school students with online learning at the next level.

### **FIGHTING THE STIGMA ABOUT COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

*(insidehighered.com)*

A plurality of Americans who earn bachelor's degrees do so by starting out at a community college. Doing so frequently means that students need not borrow (or borrow as much) to pay for college. But some high school students -- and their parents -- see community colleges as second class. Steve Robinson, the president of Owens Community College, in Toledo, Ohio, has started a social media campaign -- #EndCCStigma -- to take on the issue directly.

"Intellectually a lot of people understand our value proposition, and we've made a lot of traction, but we need to get out from a bunch of outdated assumptions about community colleges," said Robinson in an interview. As he was thinking about the issues, he said, "it hit me that this is a stigma issue. I'm a direct person, so I'm trying to amplify what people have said about how inaccurate the stigma is."

So Robinson (and other community college leaders joining the campaign) are tweeting links to columns by students who transferred to community colleges about why they floundered at four-year institutions and found purpose at community colleges, pieces in which alumni talk about "overcoming the stigma" of attending a community college, testimonials from celebrities such as Tom Hanks, and data on the benefits of attending community colleges.

The arguments and examples aren't new to those who know community colleges. But Robinson said that the hashtag is important in that advocates of community colleges are admitting that there is a stigma (which, of course, does not mean it is based on facts).

Robinson said it was important to admit that stigma is real in part because even advantages of community colleges seem, to some, to play into the stigma. "We're affordable, far more affordable," he said. "But that comes with the stigma that if it's not expensive, it can't be good."

### **COLLEGE NEWS**

Hundreds of students at the **University of Mississippi** protested Confederate statues and markers that remain on campus, saying that they should be removed. Pro-Confederate groups rallied at the university to demand that the statues remain and that other references to the Confederacy be restored.

For the first time in 15 years, the number of would-be freshmen applying to the **University of California** has dropped, the first sign that a national trend of declining college enrollment could be hitting the West Coast. Applications for the coming school year dipped by 3% to 176,530, according to preliminary UC data released Tuesday. The drop could be a temporary blip, experts said. Among the system's nine undergraduate campuses, only three — UCLA, UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz — saw declines in freshman applications.

Virginia governor Ralph Northam had planned to start his "reconciliation tour" today at **Virginia Union University**, a historically black institution. But The Washington Post reported that he called off plans to join an event there after the president of the student government wrote to him and asked him to stay away. The tour is designed to rebuild ties to black Virginians in the wake of Northam's admission that he had worn blackface. But the student government leader, Jamon K. Phenix, wrote to Northam to say that his presence would take away from a focus on the Richmond 34, black students arrested in 1960 for holding a sit-in at a lunch counter at a whites-only local department store.

## COLLEGE NEWS

A trio of **Yale University** students is suing the institution and nine of its fraternities, demanding that its Greek system be reformed and women be integrated into the all-male groups to fix a "sexually hostile" environment.

Legal experts said that the case has little chance of a ruling that all single-sex fraternities and sororities must become coeducational. This is largely because of an exemption for social Greek organizations carved out in the federal law that protects students against gender discrimination, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Where the case could be more significant is its claim that Yale's fraternities violate Title IX not just by being fraternities but by how they treat women.

The **University of California, Berkeley**, has suspended Alan Tansman, a prominent and tenured professor of East Asian studies, for two years, after finding that he sexually harassed a student, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. The punishment includes stripping him of an endowed chair.

**Creighton and Ferris State Universities** -- the former private and the latter public -- are the latest colleges to announce that they will no longer require applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores. At Ferris State, the program is billed as a pilot. Creighton's announcement said that its test-optional policy would apply to all applicants except those who are homeschooled, from outside the United States or planning to study nursing.

## LAND A SUMMER INTERNSHIP AS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

(usnews.com)

For college-bound teens, an internship in high school can help pave the way for higher education. "I think having an internship on your resume when you apply for college really shows that you're thinking about your future," says Lauren Berger, author of "All Work, No Pay: Finding an Internship, Building Your Resume, Making Connections, and Gaining Job Experience." "Those are the students that are going to succeed in the classroom."

Teens who are interested in getting this kind of work experience have a variety of ways to find internships, and can usually expect to learn some important life lessons while interning, experts say.

High school students can start by searching within their networks. "Really dig into personal relationships and connections," says Berger. Family members or the guidance counselor's office at school, she says, may be able to put teens in contact with an internship opportunity.

Teens should write down nearby companies where they would like to intern, the companies' internship coordinators, application requirements and deadlines, among other details, when getting ready for their search, Berger says. But there may be an advantage to targeting smaller companies. Larger companies, she says, often only accept college students. Smaller companies, however, may have more flexibility. "They're more willing to look outside of the box," she says.

Once teens have decided which companies they would like to work for as an intern, engaging with these organizations through social media sites, such as LinkedIn or Twitter, can be a direct way to express interest.

Often an opportunity to intern may be right around the corner. The California Science Center in Los Angeles, for example, has an internship program for local high school students only, though there are opportunities for other students to volunteer and work at the center. Teens can spend seven months during the school year or eight to 10 weeks during the summer working, for example, with the ecosystems gallery where they explain to guests how the life cycle works for different animals.

Interns typically return year after year, each time learning something new, and also learn about their options for college as part of the program, says Gretchen Bazela, director of public and community programs at the center.



**www.Internship.com**

Search for "high school" internships in your area. Each listing will tell you if the internship is full-time, part-time, paid or unpaid, etc. [Start your search](#)

## 10 COLLEGES WHERE GRADUATES HAVE THE LEAST DEBT

(usnews.com)

Among the 1,044 ranked colleges that reported these data to U.S. News in an annual survey, 2017 graduates who took out loans owed an average of \$29,938. However, among the 10 undergraduate programs where students who borrowed owed the least, the average debt burden was only \$9,411.

Pensacola State College in Florida tops the list of schools where graduates who took out loans had the least average debt, at \$3,239. On the opposite end of the spectrum, among the 10 schools where 2017 graduates who borrowed had the most debt, the average amounted to \$50,595.

Below is a list of the 10 colleges where 2017 graduates who borrowed loans to pay for school had the lowest average debt. Unranked schools, which did not meet certain criteria required by U.S. News to be numerically ranked, were not considered for this report.

School (state)	Average debt load, class of 2017	Proportion of graduating students who borrowed
Pensacola State College (FL)	\$3,239	61%
United States Merchant Marine Academy (NY)	\$3,852	25%
Berea College (KY)	\$7,468	25%
Princeton University (NJ)	\$9,005	17%
Alice Lloyd College (KY)	\$9,828	66%
CUNY—Brooklyn College	\$11,550	15%
CUNY—Hunter College	\$12,122	15%
Dixie State University (UT)	\$12,201	86%
University of North Georgia	\$12,345	53%
CUNY—Baruch College	\$12,500	22%

Don't see your school in the top 10? Access the [U.S. News College Compass](#) to find student debt information, complete rankings and much more.

## WHEN YOU TURN 18

The California Bar Foundation is proud to partner with the State Bar of California to educate young adults about their rights and responsibilities under the law.

It is illegal to:

◇ Drink while driving, or to possess any open alcoholic beverage in the car (or off-highway vehicle) or drive while under the influence of alcoholic beverages.

◇ Be drunk or under the influence of drugs in public or on a public highway and be in a condition that poses a threat to oneself or others.

◇ Possess or drink liquor (or sell or give it to anyone else) at any public school or on school grounds, with some exceptions.

◇ Have any open alcoholic beverage in any city- or county-owned park or certain other public places without a special license or unless you are recycling the container.

And if you are under 21, you cannot:

◇ Possess liquor on any roadway or in any public place; carry liquor in a car; or be a passenger in a car carrying liquor unless you're accompanied by a parent, responsible adult relative or any other adult designated by the parent or legal guardian—even if the container is sealed.

◇ Enter and remain in a bar without lawful business.

◇ Be hired to work in any establishment whose main business is selling alcoholic beverages for use on the premises. If you are under 18, you cannot work anywhere in which alcoholic beverages are purchased for take-out (a liquor or convenience store, for example) unless you are under the continuous supervision of someone who is at least 21.