



THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

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IT'S ALL GOING TO BE OK

(collegewise.com)

Parents watching kids go through the college admissions process already know how the story ends. You don't know the specifics yet. You don't know which colleges will say yes or if your kid will hit it off with their future roommate. You don't know what job your student will hold after college, where they'll live, or who they'll marry. Those are the unknowns.

We know that no teen has ever suffered as an adult because of one low grade, test score, or admissions decision in high school. We know that no adult is still smarting over not getting into a dream college when they were 18. We know this.

The ride to college may include some bumps, but it's temporary turbulence on a much longer flight of life. Transcripts, test scores, and college applications eventually recede into high school memories of our much younger selves, often in ways that aren't reflective of the adults we become.

(continued on page 8)

FIVE TRENDS TO WATCH IN THE YEAR TO COME

(hscw-counselorscorner.blogspot.com)

The Harvard Case Comes to Its First Resolution The first few months of 2019 will undoubtedly bring a decision in the Harvard Admissions case, where plaintiffs claimed Harvard had shown bias against Asian Americans. This case will likely be appealed to the US Supreme Court, but the initial decision itself could be more than enough to lead colleges to alter the tools they use in reviewing applicants. Most likely up for consideration is the use of standardized testing, where assigning a number to a student's ability is one of the easiest ways to create a comparison among students, even if the basis of the comparison is faulty. Advocates of test optional admissions see a ruling for the plaintiffs as one more nail in the coffin of standardized testing, and a rise in the use of the more amorphous holistic review.

(continued on page 2)

HOW TO DEAL WITH A DEFERRAL OR DENIAL OF ADMISSION TO COLLEGE: CHANGE PRIORITIES.

(forbes.com)

Call it a rite of passage, a journey, a process, an experience, or what you will, but regardless, applying to college is inexplicably layered with expectation, emotion, hope, and fear. The reality is, while imperfect in many ways, college admission truly is about matching a student's strengths and interests to an institution's mission and opportunities. In selective college admission, especially, there are simply not enough spaces for the abundance of qualified applicants, which means some must be shut out. A deferral or denial are not calamities, but rather an invitation to change priorities.

If you were deferred admission, your priorities should be two-fold: take steps to increase your chances of being admitted in the spring and start to get excited about your other college options.

(continued on page 4)

Five Trends to Watch in the Year to Come
(continued from page 1)

Other College Testing Likely to Change A large number of colleges stopped requiring students to submit the writing portion of either the SAT or ACT in 2018, leaving the number of schools requiring the test at around a dozen. Since nine of those schools are the UC colleges, keep an eye on what, if anything, UC does with their policy. Combined with the ever-shrinking number of colleges requiring Subject Tests, 2019 could see a major shift in the role testing plays, and in the development of home-grown alternatives for those who will want to see expertise in specific areas.

Self-Reporting Scores and July Application Windows Colleges allowing students greater control of their own application (and the chance to save some serious money) are letting students report their own grades and test scores, requiring verification as a condition of enrollment. This welcome news makes it easier for students to apply, but when paired with the new trend of colleges offering incentives for students to apply as early as July 15 of their junior-senior summer, there could be an increase in incentives for students to complete their college plans before senior year even starts. This change would throw a real wrench into the logistics and staffing of most counseling offices, and has led some counselors to wonder if early has finally become too early.

The Reality of Free College Colleges and policy makers continue to look for ways to make the financing and paying of college more manageable and palatable for students and families. Of these options, the Free College movement is likely to gain some traction, thanks to the rise of several progressive candidates in Congress. A balanced evaluation of current efforts will include an assessment of who really pays for free college, and if it advantages those who aren't already advantaged by the current system. Early findings in both these areas are murky; bringing the issue to light can only help all involved.

Liberal Arts Colleges Limping Along? A few well-placed college counselors are hearing about colleges who are experiencing the pain of discounting themselves into near bankruptcy. Unlike past predictions that the "college bubble will burst", this reality is expected to affect small liberal arts colleges only, and over a number of years. Continuing declines in some high school graduation rates might only exacerbate the problem, as colleges may have to spend more to get the attention of fewer students.

SENATE PASSES BILL TO STREAMLINE FAFSA

(*insidehighered.com*)

The Senate passed bipartisan legislation that would streamline applications for student aid and enrollment in income-driven loan repayment plans. The bill, dubbed the FAFSA Act, would do so by amending the tax code and the Higher Education Act to allow the IRS to share taxpayer information directly with the Education Department.

Federal law doesn't currently allow the two agencies to share taxpayer data. They launched the IRS data retrieval tool as a workaround that lets student aid applicants automatically import family income information into the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. But non-tax filers in particular are frequently subject to income-verification requirements. The legislation would do away with that process by including tax-filing status in information sharing.

SCHOLARSHIPS

PRIDE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS - 60 scholarships available with one application to promote leadership and diversity in the LGBTQ community. Applicants must be residents of Alaska, Washington or Oregon, and demonstrate financial need. Scholarships range from \$500-\$5,000. Deadline: Jan. 12, 2019.

[Apply here](#)

HOW TO FIND AND APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

(phillytrib.com)

To help students and families find and apply for scholarships, Sallie Mae offers six tips:

Get an early start. Apply for scholarships your junior year of high school and every year in college. Approximately 50 percent of available scholarships are for students already enrolled in college.

Don't miss out. To qualify for \$150 billion in financial aid, including scholarships, complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). Schools use the FAFSA to put together financial aid packages, states use it to determine eligibility for state aid, and it's required for many scholarships applications. Some aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, or from programs with limited funds, so the earlier families fill out the FAFSA, the better.

Remember, not everything is a deal. Never pay for scholarships and be wary of "guaranteed" money. Don't be lured in by sites or organizations that charge a fee to access scholarship applications. School counselors and school financial aid offices can recommend reputable options.

Even small savings count. Many scholarships may just be for a few hundred dollars, but these can add up and can be used for a variety of college expenses. Apply for as many as possible — you'll be surprised how much you can earn.

Take advantage of door busters. Some scholarships awards are as easy as showing up and registering. Sallie Mae, for example, offers \$1,000 monthly sweepstakes for those who sign up for its free college planning tools.

Keep an eye out for unique gifts. Scholarships are not limited to athletics and academics. There is free money for college for just about any interest, including awards for left-handed students, skateboarders and bakers.

To find additional tips and to register for Sallie Mae's Scholarships Search, visit www.salliemae.com. After filling out a brief profile, students are matched with relevant scholarships, their award amounts, application requirements and deadlines. The tool automatically sends updates when it identifies new matches.

HOW THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME COULD AFFECT THE COST OF YOUR KIDS' COLLEGE EDUCATION

(marketwatch.com)

Earlier this month, Stanford University announced that it would no longer consider the amount of equity a family has in their home when determining how much the school expects them to contribute to the cost of college. The move illustrates the challenges that even middle- and upper-middle class families face paying for school as tuition costs have skyrocketed over the past several decades, and wages remained relatively stagnant. Students from families earning \$125,000 a year or less can already attend Stanford tuition free. (A Stanford spokesman said those are the families the new policy will benefit the most.)

But roughly 200 schools, many of the most elite in the country, also use the CSS Profile, a form provided by the College Board, to determine aid eligibility. The Profile, as it's known, includes questions about home equity. Many of the schools that use the form, do take that equity into account, but in different ways.

(continued on page 5)

*How to Deal with a Deferral or Denial of Admission to College:
Change Priorities (continued from page 1)*

While being let go or deferred in December can be a sting, it's an opportunity to have a growth mindset. There are lots of great colleges and universities to explore. Take the time to grieve the disappointment, but then refocus your energy and talent to broaden your list, being as thoughtful or more so than you were with the school where you chose to apply early.

Pay attention to the instructions that the college gave when notifying you of their decision. Some schools welcome additional recommendations or other supporting materials, others encourage a follow-up interview, and some colleges ask applicants to limit what they provide to a brief paragraph updating them on any new information since your original application.

If you were denied admission, take time to recall why you prioritized this college initially and then determine how those priorities have changed in light of this decision, or how they can be redirected. What characteristics of the school were most attractive, and can you find similar strengths in the other schools on your list? Despite your disappointment, embrace the opportunities that exist on other campuses.

The truth is, identifying why you want to go to college is more important than determining where you will go. Often, students who are not admitted to their dream school are the most appreciative of, and intentional about, their college experience. Consider a denial of admission an invitation to focus less on which school you will attend, and instead, prioritize what you do while you are there.

NATIONAL COLLEGE COMPLETION RATE CONTINUES TO RISE

(insidehighered.com)

National college completion rates have increased for a third consecutive year, according to a new report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

The overall national six-year completion rate increased by 1.5 percentage points for students who entered college in fall 2012 compared to those who entered in 2011, reaching 58.3 percent. It's the highest rate in the six years the research center has tracked the data.

The report also found that completion rates for transfer students from two-year to four-year institutions increased 1.1 percentage points, to 15.8 percent.

SCHOLARSHIPS

MENSA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS - \$70,000 of scholarships awarded based solely on a 550 word essay explaining career, academic and/or vocational goals and how you plan to achieve those goals. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2019. [Apply here](#)

DECA'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - \$300,000 in scholarships from DECA's corporate partners like Marriott, Napa Autoparts and Publix. Scholarships are merit based. You must be a DECA member to apply. Deadline: Jan. 18, 2019 [Apply here](#)

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION SCHOLARSHIPS - Each year, the DAR awards more than \$150,000 through more than 25 different scholarships. Deadline: Feb. 15, 2019. [Apply here](#)

12th ANNUAL CREATE A GREETING CARD SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST - Design a greeting card and win a one-time \$10,000 scholarship. Contest is open to all students 14 years of age and older. A panel will select 100 designs per month that will be posted to The Gallery Collection's Facebook page for voting. Top 10 designs will move to the finalist round. Deadline: Mar. 1, 2019. [Apply here](#)

DUKE'S RANDOM ROOMMATES

(insidehighered.com)

When **Duke University** announced that this academic year the incoming batch of first-year students would not be allowed to pick their roommates, the headlines exploded.

Pundits espoused the benefits of students interacting outside their cultural bubbles, and online debates raged whether Duke's reasoning on the shift was sound: that when too many students self-selected, they were not exposed to the type of diversity that is a hallmark of the college experience at many institutions. Officials said the policy change never was intended for public debate, but rather they wanted to normalize the concept of two people from possibly disparate backgrounds living together.

Administrators there pair students by study and sleep habits, among other factors that the roommates indicate in a survey. The university does make special exceptions for students -- generally those with medical needs -- and to the chagrin of some, athletes.

Hadeel Hamoud, a Muslim first-year student, said at first she was uncomfortable with her roommate assignment because Islam dictates she pray five times a day, and by contrast her roommate was not religious (their lifestyles are relatively similar otherwise, although Hamoud said the university did not always produce accurate matches). Ultimately, she said she benefited because it forced her to talk with someone (and her friends) whom she otherwise would not have -- they've discussed "contentious topics," such as money, privilege, politics and race.

"This definitely would have been easier had I been matched with a roommate that is also Muslim, but I think it's a blessing because it allows me and forces me to be comfortable practicing my faith and to educate others about practices of Islam," Hamoud said.

*How the Value of your Home
Could Affect the Cost of your
Kids' College Education*

(continued from page 3)

There's no central database of schools' home equity policies, but there are a few resources that can provide clues. Edmit, a website that helps families understand college costs, features a free calculator parents and students can use to get a sense of how their home equity may affect how much they'll pay for college.

Families can also ask the schools they're interested in about their policies, though it's not always easy to get an answer. If a college won't share its policy then families can play around with their net price calculator — a tool colleges are required to have on their website that shows how much families in different financial circumstances might pay — to see if they can get a sense of how home equity factors in.

UNWELCOME GUEST

(insidehighered.com)

Students at **Northwestern University** want controversial visiting scholar who muses on race, intelligence and beauty, and who has been accused by colleagues of "bad science," off their campus. Satoshi Kanazawa is an evolutionary psychologist and reader in management at the London School of Economics and Political Science -- and current guest scholar.

Jonathan Holloway, provost and professor of history and African American studies said that Kanazawa like "all guest research scholars, he is entitled to express his personal views, including on his personal web pages, as long as he does not represent such opinions as the views of the university."

SAT PRACTICE TESTS + OTHER FREE RESOURCES

(collegevine.com)

In order to prepare for the SAT, you not only need to review key concepts, formulas, and test-taking strategies, but you also need to practice putting these skills to use in a real SAT test setting. The best way to do that is to go through practice questions and tests designed to mimic questions on the actual SAT test. Here are a few free online practice tests and resources that are guaranteed to give you the best and most accurate practice questions.

Free Online Practice Exams

CollegeBoard has partnered with Khan Academy to provide paperless, online practice exams that are automatically scored at the end of the exam and keep you on track with section time limits. These exams are perfect for anyone who is looking to practice time management and get real-time feedback on their exam. You don't have to make an account or pay any subscription for this service. It is completely free.

Paper Practice Exams

If you really want to take a paper exam since that's how it'll be on the actual test day, CollegeBoard also has some great SAT Practice Exams that can be downloaded and printed out for your convenience. There are eight exams you can go through, all in the new SAT format (on a 1600 scale).

Sample Questions

CollegeBoard releases some sample SAT questions from every SAT section on their own website, not in the form of a practice exam. These stand-alone questions are presented in a quiz-format. There is no time limit imposed.

Daily Practice App

This app gives you one SAT question a day to work through and answer, along with hints and in-depth answer explanations to help you improve. This app is not free, but it is a great resource to have when you have a few spare minutes and want to get some light SAT prep done



TECH SAFETY TIP:

Out in public, use public Wi-Fi "hotspots" only for non-sensitive activities like research and Internet surfing. Don't do your banking where you buy your lattes, and be careful about typing your social network passwords.

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

- Take ACT/SAT pre-tests
- Register to take the ACT:
Next test date: Feb 9, 2019
Deadline to register: Jan. 11
- Register to take the SAT:
Next test date: March 9, 2019
Deadline to register: Feb. 8
- Register to take Subject Tests:
Next test date: May 4, 2019.
Deadline to register: April 5
- Scope out colleges' social media pages
- Schedule campus tours

SCHOLARSHIPS

MAUREEN HOWARD N. BLITMAN ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP This non-renewable \$5000 scholarship to Promote Diversity in Engineering is awarded annually to a high school senior from an ethnic minority who has been accepted into an ABET-accredited engineering program at a four-year college or university. Deadline Mar. 1, 2019 [Apply here](#)

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](#)

SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Send completed applications by each deadline
- Practice for interviews
- Send thank you notes to anyone who wrote you a recommendation
- After filing the FAFSA, watch your inbox for the Student Aid Report
- Search for scholarships
- Check that each school has received your materials

SCHOLARSHIPS

SEG SCHOLARSHIPS - Society of Geophysicists Foundation offers merit scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 per academic year. Average awards are approximately \$3,700 for HS seniors intending to pursue a career in applied geophysics, geo sciences, physics, geology or earth and environmental sciences. Requires a 200 word essay describing how you will use geo physics or geo science in your future career. Deadline: Mar. 1, 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](#)

5 TIPS FOR MANAGING FINALS AND END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES

(collegevine.com)

As second semester heats up, many students become focused on standardized tests, upcoming AP exams, and end-of-the-year social events like the prom or graduation. Don't fall prey to end of the year responsibilities. Instead, now to preparing ahead of time and finishing the year strong.

1. Plan Ahead

This might seem like a no-brainer, but when we say plan ahead, we mean way ahead. Start a calendar now. You can already fill in so many important dates, including AP exams, SATs or ACTs, and other important commitments. Begin to block out the time you'll need leading up to important dates. Instead of just writing your Physics AP exam date on the calendar, also add a few days dedicated to final prep work leading up to it. That way, if any significant social plans arise, you'll be able to reference your calendar to gauge their feasibility before you commit.

2. Stay Focused on Academics

At this stage academics should be among your highest priorities. One way to ensure that your academics get the attention they deserve is to set aside dedicated study hours each day. If you can devote the same time to studying and homework every day, the habit is more likely to carry you through, even when other commitments heat up also.

3. Communicate With Your Teachers

One major way to get ahead of the game is to talk to your teachers in advance about end-of-year commitments. Many times, teachers have a good idea of how the end of the year will shape up well before they give you your final assignments, and in many cases, they'll be happy to share this with you in advance. Remember, though, that anything your teachers share with you in advance of announcing it in class could still be subject to change.

4. Don't Be Afraid to Say No to Events

While large events like the prom or the end-of-season sports banquet might be non-negotiable for you, smaller events like the grad party for Jimmy-from-freshman-year-algebra may be less important.

5. Have Fun and Finish Strong

While there are academics and other commitments that you simply can't avoid, if you prioritize them in advance and make a plan for completing them, you'll be in good shape to also enjoy the waning days of the school year.

It's All Going to Be OK (continued from page 1)

So please consider this: How would you behave if you knew everything was going to be OK? Would you wring your hands over 50 points on an SAT exam? Would you wage academic war with a teacher over a B+ you wished were an A? Would devastation be an appropriate reaction to a denial from a dream college?

Rationality often goes out the window when it comes to our own kids. The specifics may be uncertain, but deep down, you know it's all going to be OK when it comes to all-things-college-admissions. And it's worth reminding yourself of that every now and then.

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.

Is it safe to give out personal information online? It is never completely risk-free. So, if you do provide personal data online, take some precautions. For example, never give personal identifying information (such as your Social Security number) to solicitors or agencies that contact you first—even if the email or online advertisement looks official. It can be difficult to distinguish legitimate solicitors from those who want such information for fraudulent purposes. If you shop online, look for indications that the website is secure before you enter a credit card or other personal data.

If I meet someone online, what's the harm in sharing more about myself? It may seem safe—and even easier than in person—to share your innermost secrets with someone via the Internet. Your newfound friend may seem to understand you better than anyone else. The problem is that you do not really know who is on the other end of the online conversation. Protect yourself. Avoid revealing personal identifying information, such as your name, where you live or where you go to school, to anyone you meet online. He or she may not be anything like the person portrayed in your online friendship—and may have dangerous motives in mind.

What is sexting? The definitions for this new term vary. To some, sexting is when a young person sends or posts a sexually explicit image or message to a peer via a cell phone or the Internet. Others include sexually suggestive images and

messages in the definition. One survey found that one in five teenagers had sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves and that almost twice as many had sent or posted sexually suggestive messages. Most of the teens said the messages or photos were intended for a boyfriend or girlfriend. But sexting can have serious, unintended consequences. Such material can easily be transmitted for countless others to see—leading to embarrassment and humiliation. And depending on the message and/or photo, it could (and has in some states) potentially lead to criminal charges as well. Both federal and state law make it illegal for anyone (even minors) to possess or distribute child pornography. State law also prohibits sending a minor “harmful matter” intended to arouse and seduce the young person. And if convicted of such a crime, you could be ordered to register as a sex offender as well.

What are location-sharing services? They are services that share the user's physical location with others via their smart phones or social networking sites. Location-sharing may be a great way to track down your friends or to let your parents know when you are stuck in traffic. But there are obvious risks as well. If you let too many people know where you are—and where you are not—you could also be more vulnerable to stalkers. Or to an angry ex-boyfriend. Or to the burglar who now knows the coast is clear. Take the time to check the service's privacy controls; you may be unintentionally sharing your location with people you don't even know.