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## Is College Right for Your Child?

### How to Weigh the Pros and Cons

**F**or some parents, sending a child to college may seem impossible or even ill-advised. College is expensive. The application process seems bewildering. Is it really worth it, especially if your child has no idea what career he/she wants?

#### A College Education Creates Earning Power

The resounding answer is yes. Research shows that people with college degrees have more job choices and earn more money. In fact, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, those with bachelor's degrees earn over 80 percent more on average than those with high school diplomas. Over a lifetime, the gap in earning potential between a high school diploma and a B.A. degree (or higher) is more than \$1 million.

#### College Teaches Essential Thinking Skills

Many jobs today depend on brain power, not muscle power. In fact, the government predicts that 25 million of the 26.4 million new jobs expected by 2005 will be in service industries — including professionals of all kinds—not manufacturing.

Today nine out of 10 people change jobs at least twice in a career, often switching to fields that are brand new. Technology advances so rapidly that it is difficult to predict what kinds of new opportunities will be available to your child. But a college education will provide the critical thinking and reasoning skills to succeed in an ever-changing world.

#### Colleges Provide an Opportunity for Nearly Everyone

All this doesn't mean college is right for your child. Ultimately, he/she will have to decide that for himself/herself. But you can help him/her by understanding the choices.

Here are misperceptions parents may have about college, and some of the reasons more than half of high school graduates stop their education.

#### College is too expensive.

Many people share this misperception. While college costs are rising, one survey found people overestimated tuition at public colleges by two to three times. Not only are colleges less expensive than most believe, there is more financial aid available now than ever before — more than \$90 billion. About 6 in 10 students at four-year public schools get some type of aid, and since most financial aid is need-based, the more help you need, the more you're likely to get. You will need to look beyond the "sticker price" schools advertise and explore the aid options to determine what you will really pay. Given that your child will likely earn more with a college degree, you can consider this money an investment in his/her future.

#### I didn't go to college, so I can't send my child.

College can give your child opportunities you may not have had, and you don't have to be an expert to help



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### Is College Right for Your Child? (continued from page 1)

him/her get there. A counselor at your child's high school will help you and your child select and apply to the schools that are right for him/her. Ask the counselor about college fairs, where representatives introduce schools, and about writing to schools for information. You should also plan to try to visit a few schools.

#### **College is a waste if my child doesn't have a career plan.**

Many students have no idea what they want to study when they enroll in college. Most four-year schools require a broad course plan in English, humanities, science and math that will help your child learn about and decide on areas of study. Again, a high school counselor can provide strategies to help your child focus on a field of interest.

#### **My child did poorly in high school, so he/she won't get into college.**

Higher-education opportunities exist for just about everyone. Four-year colleges and universities offer Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees. Community, technical and junior colleges offer programs that are two years or shorter, awarding an associate's degree. Some have open enrollment policies, meaning a high school diploma or equivalent is all that's required. Some emphasize training in specific fields (such as computer technician), others offer a general academic program. There are literally thousands of schools and programs of study from which to choose. Many colleges also have programs that can help your child develop successful study habits and improve skills.

#### **My child won't fit in at college.**

With so many high school students continuing their educations, colleges are filled with people from many different backgrounds. Colleges often have

support networks and associations, such as an African-American club or Korean study group, which can help your child find people with similar needs and interests. Part of your child's education will be interacting with people of various cultures, making him/her better prepared for the world after college.

#### **Later Is Ok, Too**

Even with your encouragement, however, your child may not be ready to start college. Perhaps he/she says he/she needs a break from years of schooling. The idea of time off between high school and college can be worrisome for parents. It raises fears your child will never get the degree so crucial to success. In fact, experts say most teenagers who take time off do go on to college — and they're usually better, more motivated students than their peers.

If your child says he/she needs a break, consider together how he/she might spend the time, whether gaining job experience, volunteering, or traveling. Colleges will ask for an account of how this time was spent. A year full of rich, mind-expanding experiences will help a student's chances of admission, even if he/she has a poor high school record. Another option is to go through the college selection process and then defer for a year once accepted, an arrangement most colleges allow.

#### **The Bottom Line**

A college education can mean more money, more job choices and greater knowledge for your child. While you can't make the decision about college for him/her, you can help him/her understand the opportunities and discover the education plan that's right for him/her.



Source: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

The IUSD website contains parent resources including information on college entrance requirements, online services, financial aid, and test preparation.

Please see the following web page:

[http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/parent\\_resources/college.htm](http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/parent_resources/college.htm)



# College Admission Game Plan

## Freshman

It is never too early to plan for the future!

- Build strong academic, language, mathematics and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities that you like and stay with them through high school.
- Study hard and get excellent grades.
- Strengthen your vocabulary by increasing your reading.
- Become involved in co-curricular activities.
- Meet your high school guidance counselor and discuss your plans for the next four years.
- Browse through college literature or surf the Web to get an idea of what kinds of schools may be of interest to you.
- Check out what high school courses colleges require.
- Know NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) requirements if you want to play sports in college.
- Keep an academic portfolio and co-curricular record.
- Research career possibilities
- Begin saving money for college...if you haven't already started!

**Welcome to High School!!**

## Sophomore

- ❑ Consult your guidance counselor about taking the PSAT in October. The PSAT is a preliminary test that will prepare you for the SAT Reasoning Test. Take this test seriously! It can help you when it's SAT time!
- ❑ If you plan on taking the ACT, talk to your guidance counselor about taking the PLAN this fall. The PLAN is a preliminary standardized test that will give you some preparation for the ACT. PLAN does not have national testing dates, so ask your guidance counselor about test dates offered by your school. This is an optional test that can help you decide on a career or major.
- ❑ You need to register several weeks in advance for the PLAN and the PSAT, so consult your guidance counselor early in September.
- ❑ Take NCAA-approved courses if you want to play sports in college.

## Junior

- Register for the October PSAT. Meet with your guidance counselor to review your courses for this year and plan your schedule for senior year.
- Save samples of your best work for your academic portfolio (all year).
- Explore your college options. Make lists of your abilities, preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college. Jumpstart your college planning by reading about majors and careers. Use College Search at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) to find colleges with the right characteristics.
- Start thinking about financial aid. Talk to your counselor about your college plans and attend college night at your school. Use financial aid calculators to estimate your aid eligibility and college costs.
- Maintain your co-curricular record (all year).

## All Students

- ◆ The competition for placement in the college of your choice is steep! Planning for college admission starts your freshman year and earlier! Take advantage of your college center and counselors.
- ◆ Balance the academic course requirements with electives that enhance your chance for college admission. You can explore areas of interest while still meeting your college requirements.
- ◆ Work hard in your courses and challenge yourself academically. The college admissions staff wants to see students stretch themselves.
- ◆ Why take the PSAT Sophomore and Junior year?? Sophomore year is considered your practice SAT, whereas your Junior year, although also a practice SAT, is considered real and accountable since it does determine National Merit Scholars.

# Senior Spotlight

High school seniors have worked hard for three years, taking tests, completing projects, and preparing for college admission. When senior year rolls around some students just want to get through college applications and relax before they head off to the college of their choice.

Also known as “senioritis,” taking it easy senior year may be a nice break for your child, but is likely to do more harm than good. According to recent reports, incomplete high school preparation can contribute to academic problems in college.

- ❑ “As many as half of all college students do not have adequate academic preparation, and are required to take remedial courses.”
- ❑ “More than one quarter of the freshmen at 4-year colleges and nearly half of those at 2-year colleges do not even make it to their sophomore year.”

Not only does “senioritis” jeopardize your child’s chances for success later on in college, it can also affect his/her grades — and college admission officers pay close attention to his/her performance senior year.

## College Admission

Many students mistakenly believe that prepping for college ends after the eleventh grade. However, the senior year — the entire senior year — is actually of particular interest to colleges.

## Applying

Many college applications (including the Common Application) require your child to list his/her senior courses, including information about course levels and credit hours. It will be very obvious to the admission officers if he/she has decided to “take the year off.”

Many colleges also include as part of the application a form called the mid-year grade report. Your child’s

counselor completes this form with first semester grades and sends it to the colleges. It then becomes a crucial part of the application folder.

## If Your Child Is Accepted

Many college acceptance letters include warnings to students such as, “Your admission is contingent on your continued successful performance.” This means colleges reserve the right to deny your child admission should his/her senior year grades drop.

Mary Lee Hoganson, College Counselor for Homewood-Flossmor Community High School, Flossmor, Illinois writes: “It is not at all rare for a college to withdraw an offer of admission when grades drop significantly over the course of the senior year. (I have a folder full of copies of these letters.)”

## Helping Your Child Through Senior Year

Senior year is your child’s opportunity to strengthen his skills and broaden his/her experiences, in school and out, to prepare for all of the challenges ahead. With your encouragement and support, and the help of his/her teachers, your child’s senior year will help launch him/her on the path to a successful future.

## A Challenging Course Load

Your child should take the most rigorous courses available, and be sure to continue taking college-track subjects. He/she should consider AP courses, which can also earn his/her additional credit at many colleges.

## Pursuing Activities

Your child’s continued involvement in activities, sports, volunteer work, etc. will help him/her stay active and focused throughout his/her final year. In addition, a great internship or career-focused job opportunity can help motivate your child to start considering his/her career options. Meaningful and significant experiences will help prepare him/her to make informed decisions about his/her education and career goals.



## Try out College Early

If your child is interested in pursuing a subject further, and has excelled at his/her high school classes so far, he/she should consider taking a class at a local college. This challenge can help him/her avoid sliding into an academic slump, and stimulate her interest in the possibilities of college.

Another option in many areas is “middle college” or “early college” high schools. These schools, normally located on community and four-year college campuses, allow students to spend their last two years taking classes in both college and high school. Early exposure to college classes introduces students to the rigor of college work while easing their transition from high school. (Orange Coast Middle High School is only open to Newport-Mesa District).

## Explore All the Options

Your child’s continued commitment to challenge himself/herself and grow will help him/her to maintain his momentum, and make smart decisions about his/her future. Your child should discuss all his/her education options with his/her counselor to create a plan that puts him/her on the right track for success — throughout his/her high school years and beyond.

Sources: *National Commission on the High School Senior Year, The Lost Opportunity of Senior Year: Finding a Better Way - Summary of Findings*, Barth, P., Haycock, K., Huang, S. and Richardson, A., *Youth at the Crossroads: Facing High School and Beyond*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2000.

# Update on UC's New Testing Requirements.....

Fall 2006 (present Seniors)

Students applying to college for freshman admission in fall 2006 will be the first to take revised ACT and SAT tests. The new SAT Reasoning Test — which includes a student-written essay, eliminates verbal analogies and quantitative comparisons, adds shorter reading passages and new mathematics content — was introduced at test centers on March 12, 2005. The ACT Assessment plus Writing debuted February 12, 2005.

Students, parents and counselors have raised questions about the revised tests and how they relate to University of California admissions. We outline the testing requirements and answer the most frequently asked questions below.

**The new requirement effects students entering UC as freshmen in fall 2006 and later. Each applicant must submit scores on an approved test of mathematics, language arts and writing.**

This requirement can be satisfied by taking either of the following:

- the ACT Assessment plus Writing
- the new SAT Reasoning Test

In addition, students must take two SAT Subject Tests in two different subject areas.

**If a student entering UC as a freshman in 2006 took the SAT I and/or the SAT II: Writing prior to March 2005, will his or her examination results fulfill the testing requirement for a class entering in fall 2006 or later?**

No. Because of the changes to the SAT Reasoning Test, UC expects such students to take the new SAT Reasoning Test.

**If a student took the ACT Assessment before spring 2005, will UC accept this version of the ACT as long as the student also takes the ACT Writing Test**

**when it is available?**

ACT will not permit students to take the Writing Test by itself. Students who wish to use the ACT Assessment as their core exam must complete the ACT Assessment and the ACT Writing Test at the same sitting. (Note: This reflects a change from UC's previously announced policy, which indicated that students could submit a separate ACT Writing score.)

**The ACT Assessment plus Writing test will provide two additional scores beyond what students receive if they take the ACT Assessment alone — a Writing score and a Combined English/Writing score. Which score will UC use?**

UC will use the Combined English/Writing score.

**Can a student take the SAT II: Writing Test in combination with the ACT Assessment to fulfill the core examination requirement?**

No. UC will not accept the SAT II: Writing Test as a substitute for the ACT Writing Test for fall 2006 applicants. (Note: The SAT II: Writing Test has been discontinued.)

**Will freshman applicants who graduate from high school in spring 2005 (or earlier) and who apply for admission for the fall 2006 term be required to submit test scores from the new tests?**

In accordance with UC admissions guidelines, freshman applicants must complete the subject and testing requirements no later than the date of high school graduation. Fall term 2006 freshman applicants who graduate from high school in spring 2005 or earlier are required to meet the eligibility requirements in place at the time of high school graduation.

**Can a student meet UC's requirement by taking two SAT Subject**

**Tests in one discipline area — for example, the U.S. History and World History tests, or the Chemistry and Biology E/M tests, or the French Reading and French Reading with Listening tests?**

No. The admissions testing requirement calls for completion of two SAT Subject Tests in two different subject areas.

**Are specific SAT Subject Tests required for admission to certain campuses or majors?**

Specific SAT Subject Tests may be preferred for admission to certain majors. For example, applicants to the following UC campus schools, colleges or majors are strongly encouraged to take the SAT Subject Test: Math Level 2 and a SAT science subject test (Biology E/M, Chemistry or Physics) that is closely related to the applicant's intended major:

- Berkeley: Colleges of Chemistry and Engineering
- Los Angeles: Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science
- Riverside: Marlan and Rosemary Bourns College of Engineering
- San Diego: Jacobs School of Engineering; also recommended for students considering majoring in the biological or physical sciences
- Santa Barbara: Engineering and Computer Science majors
- Irvine: Applicants to the Henry Samueli School of Engineering are strongly encouraged to take the SAT Subject Test: Math Level 2 as one of the two required SAT Subject Tests.

## UC Information

### How will the new tests be weighted in UC's eligibility index?

The UC Academic Senate's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) has recommended that, pending future research on the predictive validity of the different exams, the three components of the new SAT Reasoning Test and the two SAT Subject Tests be weighted equally in the eligibility index. For students who complete the ACT Assessment Plus Writing, the University will use the ACT Assessment with the English/Writing score plus two SAT Subject Tests in the eligibility index. A revised eligibility index — one for the SAT Reasoning Test plus two SAT Subject Tests and one for the ACT Assessment Plus Writing and two SAT Subject Tests — has been released for students applying for admission to the fall 2006 term.

### If a student takes the ACT or SAT more than once, will the University use the highest score?

Yes, the University uses the highest scores from a single testing administration.

### If a student takes more than two SAT Subject Tests, will the University use the best two scores?

Yes, provided that these scores represent two different subject areas.

### How will UC admissions reviewers use the essay portion of the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT Assessment Plus Writing?

The University of California has no plans to view the essay portion of either exam or to use the essay subscore.

### Will UC be revising its Eligibility by Examination requirements for 2006-07 admission?

Yes, information on requirements for Eligibility by Examination will be available in September, 2005.

### Will UC use the SAT Reasoning Test (Writing) to satisfy the University's Entry Level Writing Requirement?

Yes, UC will use the writing score from the SAT Reasoning Test (Writing) to fulfill the Analytical Writing Placement Examination (formerly the Subject A Examination) requirement. The ACT English/Writing score can also be used to meet this requirement. Information on the required minimum scores to fulfill the University's Entry Level Writing Requirement using these new tests is expected in winter 2006.

### Will UC use the SAT Writing score to demonstrate English proficiency in lieu of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)?

Yes, the University of California will use the writing score from the SAT Reasoning Test (Writing) to demonstrate English proficiency. The ACT English/Writing score can also be used to meet this requirement. Information on the required minimum score to demonstrate English proficiency using these new tests is expected in summer 2006.

### College Guidance Book

Now accessible on-line, the College Guidance Book is written specifically with Irvine students and families in mind. From annual checklists, to creating your Admission folder, the College Guidance Book will help you proceed with confidence.

## SAT Subject Test Requirements



Freshman applicants must submit scores on two SAT Subject Tests in two different subject areas of the student's choice: English, history and social studies, mathematics, science or languages. The University accepts the following Subject Tests in partial fulfillment of the admissions testing requirement:

- English  
Literature
- History and Social Studies  
U.S. History (formerly American History and Social Studies)  
World History
- Mathematics  
Math Level 2 (formerly Math IIC)
- Science  
Biology E/M (Special emphasis is placed on either ecology — Biology-E, or molecular biology — Biology-M)  
Chemistry  
Physics
- Languages  
Chinese with Listening  
French  
French with Listening  
German  
German with Listening  
Spanish  
Spanish with Listening  
Modern Hebrew  
Italian  
Latin  
Japanese with Listening  
Korean with Listening

Effective fall 2006, completion of SAT II: Writing or SAT II: Math level IC will not meet the fall 2006 requirement.

## What part should my parents play in my college application?



Parental involvement in the college admissions process varies from family to family, and is sometimes a point of conflict. At the very least, your parents will have to fill out financial aid forms so that your application process can be completed. Parents can perform other valuable tasks for your application that might not be so obvious.

Some colleges allow for a so-called optional recommendation. This provides parents with an opportunity to tell why their son or daughter is so special. You may wonder why a college admissions officer would want to read an obviously biased letter from a parent. The reason lies within the letter's anecdotal information.

Anecdotal information is made up of stories about the candidate drawn from real life. If a parent is capable of writing in simple, clear terms, the optional reference is a splendid opportunity to bring little-known information to the attention of the admission staff. Few items in the application will make an impression like a sincere statement from a mother or father. Obviously, if the student's grades and other qualifications don't make the cut, a good parental word will not by itself turn the tide of admission.

Another function parents can perform is application management. Most high school seniors have a lot going on at any given point in the school year. If a parent is good at meeting deadlines and can follow up on details, application management can be a worthwhile contribution to the process. This amounts to becoming familiar with what is required by the school for a completed application. This information is usually provided at the front of the application package. All deadlines for the various forms are noted. Parents can then make certain that the applicant is working on the proper form at the proper time. This is a very important task and can help avoid embarrassing oversights and late submissions.

One final word: include your parents in your application process. Don't exclude them. The more you can work together as a team now, the better things will be whenever you head off in the fall for your first year of college.

Source: [www.collegeconfidential.com](http://www.collegeconfidential.com)

### SAT and Subject Test Dates 2005/2006

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Late</u>
October 8	Sept. 7	Sept. 14
November 5	Sept. 30	Oct. 12
December 3	Oct. 28	Nov. 9
January 28	Dec. 22	Jan. 4
April 1**SAT ONLY	Feb. 24	Mar. 8
May 6	Apr. 3	Apr. 12
June 3	Apr. 28	May 10



PSAT.....Saturday, October 15th



### ACT Test Dates 2005/2006

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Late</u>
October 22	Sept. 16	Sept. 16-30
December 10	Nov. 4	Nov. 5-17
February 11	Jan. 6	Jan. 7-20
April 8	March 3	March 4-17
June 10	May 5	May 6-19



## WEBSITES YOU NEED TO CHECK OUT!!

- [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) (SAT prep, college search, etc.)
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (This is where you sign up for the SAT. Comprehensive site for all your college searches)
- [www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/welcome.html](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/welcome.html) (University of California website....great information for all UC campuses)
- [www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu) (All the information you'll need for the Cal State Campuses)
- [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) (SAT and subject test tutoring)
- [www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com) (Scholarship and college search)
- [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) (Free Application and information for Federal Student Aid)
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) (Comprehensive scholarship search engine)
- [www.finaid.com](http://www.finaid.com) (Comprehensive scholarship search engine)
- [www.collegeconfidential.com](http://www.collegeconfidential.com) (A wealth of information!)

# Welcome Back to School



Future editions of the Academic Bulletin will be available on the IUSD website.  
(Previous editions are also available online.)

[http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/parent\\_resources/academic.htm](http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/parent_resources/academic.htm)

Should you wish a hard copy, your student may pick up a paper copy at their counseling office.



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