

# FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING



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## Tips and Tricks for Getting the Most Out of Your College Visits

BY SHIRLEY YOUNG

As our students transition into the second semester, one common topic that we get a lot of questions on is that of school visits. Spring break is a popular time for students to visit colleges and, on their end, colleges often host increased visiting opportunities for interested students throughout the spring. Read on for some tips and information on how to make the most out of your college visits trip!

The first thing to consider is the list of colleges that you want to visit. A good idea is to map out the colleges you have a greater interest in applying to, and then seeing if there is a geographic area where more of these colleges are clustered. For example, you could fairly reasonably map out a Southern California college visits trip that includes USC, UCLA, and the Claremont Colleges (Pomona College, Scripps College, Claremont

McKenna College, Harvey Mudd College, and Pitzer College). A trip to Boston, MA could encompass Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Northeastern University, and Tufts University, to name a few. Taking a look to see where a good portion of your schools are located geographically could help you to get the most value out of this college visits trip.

Once you have a list of schools planned out to visit, the next thing to consider is the actual school visit. Most colleges will offer both a campus tour and an information session, usually one right after the other. The tours are typically led by undergraduate student volunteers, while the information sessions are held by admissions officers and, sometimes, faculty members. These are great opportunities to ask questions about what it's like to be a student on campus, what kind of resources are offered, what kind of extracurricular opportunities students can participate in, and so on. In next month's newsletter, we will cover in more detail what to look out for on these college visits, as well as what kind of questions to ask. A couple of things to consider when planning out an itinerary for college visits is that colleges typically offer these tour and information session combinations during the weekdays (although there are quite a few schools that will open up weekend visits as well during the busy spring season), and these will commonly be offered twice a day - once in the morning, and once in the afternoon. Please plan accordingly if you are hoping to visit two schools in one day, and always make sure to take traffic times into consideration.

We hope these tips and tricks are helpful for you in planning out your college visits itinerary. In next month's newsletter, we will cover things to watch out for on your visit, questions to ask both students and faculty, and how to follow-up with the people you spoke with to create a lasting positive impression.



# The Importance of the College Career Services Center

BY BELINDA TANG

When applying to colleges, people often look at the percentage of graduates who land full-time jobs and their salary ranges. Ever wondered why some schools boast a higher post-grad job rate with a higher salary range? Of course, a student's own hard work and the prestige of the school play important roles, but that is only part of the picture. The rest of the picture? A wonderful team at the career service office!

Good career service centers are an essential part of students' success because they have the resources and associations with other offices in the university to help students with their career development. Career service centers often work with offices such as advising and counseling as well as alumni connections to provide students with the opportunities and resources needed to explore or further develop experiences in a particular field. For example, by using their close working relationship with the alumni connections office, career service centers can often link students up with alumni through phone interviews, shadowing opportunities, or even externships. This service is especially helpful for those who may not know what career to pursue after graduation.

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Career service centers also work closely with agencies outside of the university to coordinate opportunities for students. Career service centers are responsible for coordinating on-campus recruiting events and career fairs. Companies also often reach out to career service centers to express their interest in holding on-campus recruiting events

or offering students special positions. As a result, people who work at the career service centers are up to date in their knowledge about recruiting tips and tricks and can often help students get connected with opportunities that students may not even know existed.

That's not all. Those working in career services also provide in-depth resume and cover letter critiques to help students successfully pass screening rounds and land that dream job/internship. The staff is also trained on how to provide mock interviews, not just behavioral ones but also field specific interviews. For example, design students can schedule portfolio and portfolio presentation critiques with career services. Once that dream job is secured, career service centers can coach students in career development topics such as networking and salary negotiations.

After hearing about the importance of a good career service center, you must be asking "How do you determine if the school has a good center?" A simple way, if the opportunity occurs, is to ask alumni about their experience at their school's career service center during alumni conducted admission interviews or other alumni interaction chances. Is the center well-staffed? What services do they provide? How often do they have on-campus recruiting opportunities? Another thing you can do in the comfort of your home is to visit the career service center's website. Look at the calendar on the website to see how active the center is when it comes to putting on workshops to help students with their career development. What resources do they have online to help students? Do they look for opportunities such as internship and job postings for students to apply to? A third way to get to know the school's career center is to go visit! When you go on your college campus tours or new admit days, don't just stop by the admissions office, also stop by the career services office and talk to the staff there.

Now that you have read the behind the scenes of what people who work at the career service centers do, I hope you have a newfound appreciation for the statistics you see online that measure post-grad success at universities. They say it takes a village to raise a child. It also certainly takes a village to help students develop their careers!

# SAT Subject Tests: A Requirement For Fewer and Fewer Schools

BY CLAIRE SCHADLER

As discussions over the equity of standardized tests continue, colleges are focused on revising their policies about the requirement of these test scores in their admissions process. While much of the recent attention has been on the SAT and ACT, schools are also making changes to their admissions requirements for the SAT subject tests. Just last month, California Institute of Technology announced that they will no longer require SAT subject tests as part of their admissions process. Moving to a test-optional approach has become the trend for both the SAT and ACT, as well as the SAT subject tests.

While it used to be the norm to require three subject tests for admissions to any competitive school, that trend has been declining over the last ten years. In general, schools started by requiring only two subjects instead of three. Then, many schools chose to require the tests only for students who were applying to certain programs, and now many schools have stopped requiring them all together. For example, the University of California stopped requiring students to submit SAT subject test scores back in the fall of 2012.

With most schools choosing to go test-optional for SAT subject tests, there are now very few schools remaining that require these scores for all of their applicants. However, some colleges still do, including Harvey Mudd College and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Other schools require subject test scores for some of their applications. For example, students applying to the Integrated Science Engineering Program at Northwestern are required to submit three subject test scores, but for other degree programs at Northwestern it is optional to submit subject test scores.

As with the SAT and ACT, the main motivating factor for these changes is fairness and equal access. Since not all students have access to tutoring and test prep classes, or the financial means to pay to retake the test multiple times, colleges are realizing that these tests serve as a barrier to admissions for many students. In their place, colleges are moving toward taking a more holistic approach to admissions, focusing on the rigor of students' coursework and their achievements in their classes, as well as the quality of their personal statements.

Changes in testing requirements are sure to continue over the coming years. In the current test-optional world of college admissions, it's important to realize that test-optional truly means optional. If a student's score would add to the overall strength of their application, by all means, submit it. However, if a student's strength lies elsewhere, focus on highlighting that aspect of their experiences in their college applications.



# Practical Benefits to Studying Abroad

BY KARA SMITH

Studying abroad has become increasingly popular, as more than 10% of students study abroad at some point during their college career. Although increasing in popularity, it is still an impressive undertaking for a student to venture outside of their comfort zone to study in another country, and for that reason it is helpful for both career and continued education prospects.

Aside from being a life-changing experience, there are many practical benefits that make studying abroad an ideal choice for students. Studying abroad can help students expand their global network, as they meet other students who are from a different part of the world but studying similar things. As with any networking experience, this could lead to job opportunities and invaluable connections down the road. Additionally, having the opportunity to experience and learn about a new culture firsthand is integral for students to have a better understanding of the world around them. For students who spend a full semester or year abroad, as opposed to just the summer, they could even have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the local language and take language courses at the university

As popularity has increased, so has the accessibility. Even students with more rigorous schedules, such as those

studying engineering, are encouraged to study abroad. As a result, schools have prioritized partnering with schools in other countries to promote the study abroad experience. For example, Duke University boasts programs on 6 different continents, and allows you to complete core subjects at one of their partner universities. Pepperdine University has consistently ranked in the top five in the nation for study abroad participation, with more than 80% of students participating, as advisors and staff work closely with students to help them find their ideal program. You'll also find schools that will take it a step further, such as USC with its World Bachelor in Business program. This program allows students to attend three different universities on three different continents as they complete their degree, and the student will still graduate in four years.

For more information about study abroad programs at specific colleges, you can look on the university's website and you will normally find a tab for their international program. Whether students are interested in the practical benefits of studying abroad, or are just taking advantage of the opportunity to receive academic credit from a different institution, the popularity of studying abroad isn't slowing down any time soon. For students who want to stand out among their peers, spending time immersing themselves in a new culture is an excellent option.

