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JANUARY NEWSLETTER

LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING



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WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEW YEAR

BY: EDDIE LAMEIRE

Hello all,

Welcome to 2020! We are looking forward to a good, productive year. We also have some news: We have moved our Santa Clara office to Cupertino, which should be more convenient to everyone in that area.

Our new address is 10052 Pasadena Avenue, Suite C, in Cupertino. We will also, for the first time, offer face-to-face tutoring, particularly in English literature, writing, and SAT/ACT reading, writing, and grammar.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Cupertino!

Sincerely,

Eddie

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND STANDARDIZED TESTING

BY: CLAIRE SCHADLER

As more and more schools become test-optional, the future of the SAT and ACT remains uncertain. The first schools to move to test-optional admissions requirements were small liberal arts schools; however, over the years, this trend was followed by larger, more competitive schools, such as the University of Chicago and Wake Forest. The number of schools that are test-optional currently stands at over 1,000. Now, the next set of schools thinking about joining the list of test-optional colleges and universities is the University of California.

While this decision is not final, a UC faculty committee is in the middle of considering the options available to the UC schools. One option would be to replace SAT and ACT with the Smarter Balanced tests, which are required for all California students as a way to gauge their math and English skills. Reasons for considering this test as an alternative include the fact that all California students are required to take the test anyway and the cost of the test is covered by the state. Another option is to continue using the SAT and ACT, but put into place policies that would counter the inequality of the tests, ensuring UC continues to admit students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Even though much research has shown that standardized tests are a strong indicator of a student's success in college, especially when paired with a student's GPA, the inequality inherent in these tests has given colleges pause over whether or not to include them as an admissions requirement. The growing concern over how family income serves as a strong determiner in how students perform on standardized tests is one of the main reasons schools are deciding to change their policies.

With over 280,000 students enrolled in their 10 campuses, a decision by the University of California to go test-optional would have a huge impact on the College Board and standardized testing practices across the country. This decision would set a precedent for other colleges nationwide who are considering a shift in their own admission policies.

Although this decision will not be made easily or quickly (probably not until next year), the fact that such a large and prestigious university system is considering going test-optional shows that changes in standardized testing requirements will continue to be a hot topic in college admissions for years to come.

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THE EFFECTS OF THE TRADE WARS ON COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

BY: SHIRLEY YOUNG

Over the past decade, colleges in the United States have seen a steep increase in the number of international students accepted. In fact, the University of California system faced sharp criticism just a few short years ago after reports surfaced that they were rejecting California students in favor of international students, with the reason being that out-of-state students paying full tuition add plentifully to the schools' coffers. At schools like NYU and USC, international students make up nearly a quarter of the student population. This is a trend that can be seen at many universities all across the nation, with good reason. Education is one of the few sectors where the US experiences a surplus in profit. International students contributed \$44.7 billion dollars to the US economy in the last year alone, and students from China led the contingent with a record-breaking 370,000 students (out of a total of a little over one million international students currently studying in the US). However, with the recent trade war and President Trump's new US-China policies, how will this affect the flow of international students to the States, and what does this all mean for our domestic students?

Colleges in America are already feeling the impact of the recent political developments on their supply of international student applications. Many universities are dependent on international students and their full tuition rates to help balance budgets, and the loss of the Chinese market could have dire financial consequences for these schools. From the students' perspective, the trade wars have meant longer visa review processes, shorter visa validity periods, and an increase in application rejections. There have been several cases of students who have accepted offers of admission from colleges and arrived in the States only to be turned away at Customs.

International students are increasingly turning towards other options outside of the United States for their higher education aspirations. The UK saw a 30% increase in international applications over the past two years, and Canada saw a 15% increase in applications. By contrast, the US experienced a 10% decrease in international applications during that same period. What does this all mean and how does it impact domestic students? Colleges will still maintain international student quotas in order to meet revenue needs as well as uphold their public relations statuses. However, this decrease in the international influx of students could potentially lead to less competition and higher chances of admissions for domestic students. It will take some more time before a more solid trend emerges and for colleges to become less tight-lipped about this situation, but overall, the decline in international applicants could bode well for domestic students here in the States.

EARLY DECISION PROGRAM CHANGES

BY: KARA SMITH

In the ever-changing world of college applications, things just got a little easier for students who will be applying to colleges starting this year.

After a two-year investigation, the Justice Department settled a case in December against the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) to remove rules regarding the recruitment of prospective freshmen and prospective Early Decision applicants after May 1st. The Justice Department found that the current recruitment standards “substantially reduced competition among colleges for college applicants and potential transfer students and deprived these consumers of the benefits.” But what does all of this mean, and how will it directly affect students?

In the past, students have been encouraged by universities to enter into Early Decision agreements that would guarantee their commitment to attending a university. Although it wasn't legally binding, this standard was widely followed and prevented universities from “competing” for applicants.

With the ruling that was reached last month, colleges will now be free to offer incentives to encourage students to apply for Early Decision. These perks could be specialized scholarships, priority course selection, or on-campus housing preferences; among others. Importantly, colleges are now able to show preference to Early Decision applicants over those who are applying Regular Decision.

Another notable change is that universities will be able to continue recruiting students even after May 1, which is the accepted deadline for students who have applied through regular decision. In the past, this deadline has also been set for students who are considering offers between multiple schools, possibly as they weigh the different financial aid packages that the schools are offering. With the new norms set in place, universities will be able to continue recruiting students up until the start of the semester for the incoming freshmen or transfer students.

These new changes will surely shake up the admissions process over the coming year. Students will likely benefit from more competitive financial aid packages, as universities will be aware that if they aren't offering ideal scholarships to qualified students then other universities will have the opportunity to bargain and offer the student a better deal.

Overall, this is a win for students and we certainly expect that our students will benefit from more competitive scholarships and other “perks.”

