

# MARCH NEWSLETTER

LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING



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## April and May College Fairs

With spring just around the corner, we want to keep you updated on the upcoming college fairs in the Bay Area. We've selected some that we think you would most likely be interested in, but if you have questions about any other fairs feel free to reach out to us for more information.

**WACAC Sacramento (Sacramento State) – Sunday, April 26, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**WACAC Sonoma County (Sonoma State) – Tuesday, April 28, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**WACAC Marin County (Dominican University of California) Wednesday, April 29, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**WACAC Santa Clara/South Bay (West Valley College) – Thursday, April 30, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**WACAC Coastal East Bay (CSU East Bay) – Friday, May 1, 10:00 a.m. – noon**

# Average Salaries for Berkeley Graduates

BY KARA SMITH

We are always on the lookout for resources that could help students as they decide what college is best for them, and what they can expect from studying a specific major. We recently came across a comprehensive list of majors and the typical careers that come from studying that major, as well as their expected salaries, on Berkeley's website. This could be an invaluable tool for students as they navigate their skills and interests, and how that can be applied to a major.

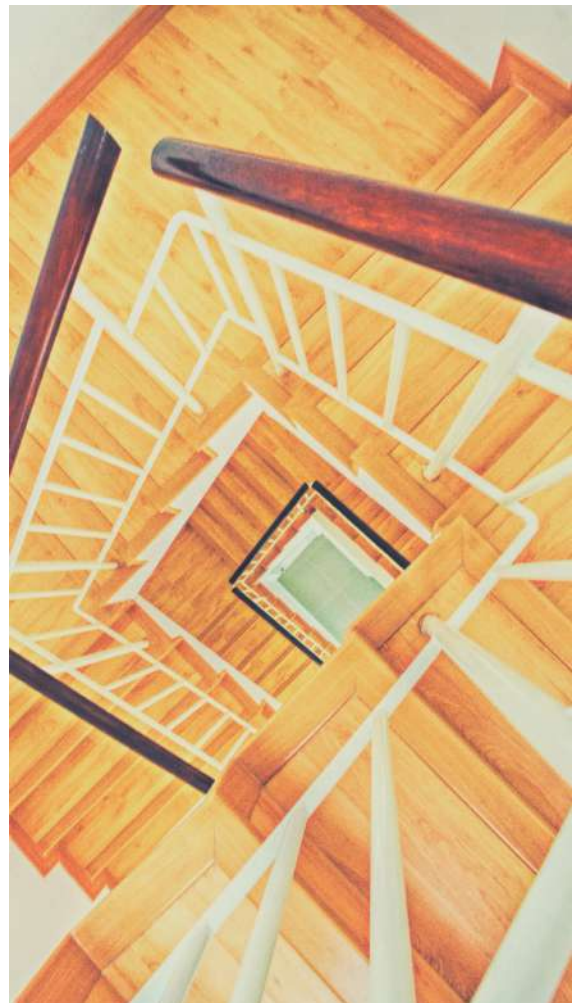
To make use of this resource, there are a few things you will want to look at. For a general idea, **[simply click here](#)** and you will be provided with a list of majors to choose from. From there, you can scroll through the majors and find out more about them. For example, if you look at the HAAS School of Business and click on Business Administration, you can find out employment activities for 2018 graduates, their current employers, and the average base salary. With this tool, you can compare the differences in salary between CS, EECS, and other majors for Berkeley graduates, and decide how that lines up with expectations.

Additionally, there is a **[general list that you can find here](#)** that shares an update from the 2019 graduating class. This includes the companies that hired them, how many students graduated from each college at Berkeley, where the students are located, and the overall average salary.

The website also offers an opportunity to see the post-graduate route that students take and where they decide to study for a master's degree. These options can help students plan for several years down the road, as they see the opportunities for the major they are interested in and get an idea of where students with similar interests have studied and found success.

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*With this tool, you can compare the differences in salary between CS, EECS, and other majors for Berkeley graduates*



# Unusually Low 2019 PSAT Scores: What Happened and Why Does it Matter?

BY CLAIRE SCHADLER

While a PSAT score is not part of a typical college application, it can be important for a number of other reasons. From determining who is awarded National Merit Scholarships and placing students in AP classes, to college recruitment and helping counselors provide academic and college admissions counseling, PSAT scores have a number of important uses. This is why the sudden drop in the 2019 PSAT was particularly surprising.

I won't get too deep into the numbers, but I will say that the drop in scores was significant enough to gain attention. One important point when analyzing the data from these tests is that both high-achieving and lower-achieving students were affected. For example, the number of juniors who scored over 1400 decreased by 30%, and the number of juniors who scored over 1200 was down by 15%. Also, the drop in scores on the Math section was almost two times that of the Evidence-based Reading and Writing section.

Since the College Board has not responded to this data, it's unclear the real reason for such a significant drop. However, since 2017 and 2018 test scores were relatively similar. The most obvious answer is that the 2019 test was poorly constructed, perhaps due to inaccurate sampling during the making of the test. Since the College Board does not provide any information about the PSAT, there are still some questions about the specifics of what happened. There is also uncertainty about the ramifications for the National Merit Scholarship and whether high schools will handle the 2019 scores differently.

The College Board has faced a lot of scrutiny, particularly for the SAT, with issues ranging from tests being leaked and unusual changes in test curves to the backlash over the adversity score. The 2019 PSAT is another example of why some people are critical of the College Board and standardized tests.

So, what can you as parents and students do about this situation? One important piece of advice is to come up with a standardized test-taking strategy, particularly for the SAT since it has a more direct impact on college admissions. By that I mean that you shouldn't assume taking the test one time will be enough. There are a number of extenuating circumstances that could affect the test and a student's performance on it. Therefore, it's important to give yourself time and be prepared to take the test again if the testing conditions negatively affect your score. As concerns over whether these mistakes in test construction may affect the SAT, making your own test-taking plan will help you avoid any unforeseen problems.





# Opportunities for College Visits

BY SHIRLEY YOUNG

In last month's newsletter, we covered details on how to plan out the best itinerary for college visits. In this month's review of the college visit process we'd like to discuss special visiting opportunities. Read on for more information on how to look for these, as well as how to prepare for them if given the opportunity.



Once in awhile, you will come across a school that offers interested students the opportunity of an overnight stay. This entails the student spending a day with an undergraduate volunteer, which includes visiting the dining halls, sleeping in the dorms, and so on. While this will take a bit more planning, it is something that can help a student get a better feel of what it's really like to be a student on that particular campus. They will be able to see first-hand how undergraduate students at that college live and play.

Another rare but great opportunity is that of special tours and information sessions given by individual campus departments - for example, through engineering, the arts department, life sciences, and so on. Keep in mind that these are separate from the regular admissions tours and information sessions, and are worth asking the college about if the student already knows which field he or she is interested in. With departmental tours, typically the student meets (whether individually or as a group) with a professor or advisor from that department who will take the student on a tour. The professor or advisor will point out relevant information such as labs and studios undergraduate students have access to, the academic advising center and resources related to the department, current research projects happening, and so on. If given the opportunity to join one of these tours, students should prepare more in-depth questions related to their intended major. After all, with departmental tours students are given a much more detailed glimpse into what their educational paths might be like as an undergraduate student at that school. Questions should be practical, and students should spend some time researching the department online before heading into the tour.

Lastly, we also suggest checking to see if a college you are interested in visiting allows appointments for on-campus interviews with the admissions department. This is a valuable opportunity to show demonstrated interest in a school, as well as a great chance for the student to learn more about what the school is looking for in its admitted student body. We at LaMeire College Consulting would be happy to provide an interview training session if this is an opportunity that you gain access to.

We hope that we have been able to shed some helpful light on how to navigate the college visit process. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions. As well, we would be happy to provide a PDF resource full of additional tricks and tips on how to make the most out of your visit. Please shoot us an email at [shirley@lameirecollegeconsulting.com](mailto:shirley@lameirecollegeconsulting.com) if this is something that you would like access to and we will send that over to you.