

APRIL NEWSLETTER

LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING

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FYI: All college fairs that were mentioned in last month's newsletter have been cancelled.

Saturday April 11 (12:30pm - 2:00pm PST): Exploration of the college essay and how to write impactful personal statements.

Sunday April 19 (12:30pm - 1:30pm PST): Digesting college results from the 2019-2020 admissions cycle.

How COVID-19 Will Affect Summer Plans

BY SHIRLEY YOUNG

We hope that everyone is staying safe and well! During these strange times, many plans have been thrown into disarray. It is natural to wonder what to expect on the horizon, especially regarding students' summer plans. We at LaMeire College Consulting have been in constant contact with many different summer programs and organizations regarding updates on what the next few months might look like, and in this month's newsletter we'd like to help shed some light on what to expect.

We will start off by discussing summer programs. Some programs have unfortunately had to make the decision to cancel plans for the summer, while others are working hard to find a way to deliver the program virtually. We are expecting that programs requiring face-to-face interaction or lab components will likely need to be cancelled. The Stanford Institute of Medicine's Summer Research Program (SIMR), the UC Davis Young Scholars Program (YSP), and the High School Honors Science, Math and Engineering Program (HSHSP) are among the first programs to pull the plug on their summer programming, with more programs making a decision about this in the coming weeks. This is definitely unfortunate, but please rest assured that our team is working hard to pull together resources and opportunities for our students who have had their summer plans disrupted.

With the shelter-in-place orders having been extended several times now, our team will turn towards virtual involvement opportunities as backup options for our students, should their summer program plans fall through. One main thing we are focusing on is online volunteering opportunities. These include having students work with local and national non-profits in remote roles, translation and transcription work, and so on. Another thing students can consider is working with university faculty on remote research projects. As time goes on, more and more organizations and virtual opportunities will present themselves, and you can rest assured that we will stay at the forefront of this so that we may provide our students with the best support possible.

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In the meantime we have contacted a good number of summer programs to inquire about their summer plans. In particular, we have asked if they still intend on running, given shelter-in-place orders are lifted by that time. Here are the programs that have responded in the affirmative that they will be holding either face to face or online versions of the program (although please be advised that these can change as time develops):

- Stanford Summer Humanities Institute (SSHI)
- Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies
- Yale Young Global Scholars (YYGS)
- UCSB Summer Research Academies (SRA)
- UCSB Research Mentorship Program (RMP)
- Ross Mathematics Program
- Program in Mathematics for Young Scientists (PROMYS)
- Secondary Student Training Program (SSTP)
- De Anza College APALI
- UCSC Science Internship Program (SIP)
- Carleton CS Liberal Arts Institute
- UCSD Big Data Camp
- Michigan Math and Science Scholars (MMSS)
- BU Rise
- Davidson THINK
- UCLA DESMA

We will continue to keep our students and their families updated as new information rolls in. In the meantime, please stay safe and well. As always, let us know any questions that may arise.

Testing Updates

BY CLAIRE SCHADLER

We are definitely living in uncertain times, and changes to standardized tests are just another aspect of life that is demanding flexibility and adjustments.

Let's look at some of these changes, starting with AP exams. The College Board will be offering the AP exams; however, there are going to be a lot of significant changes. First, these will be online exams taken at home. For all subjects, there will be no multiple choice questions; all questions will be free response questions. Another significant change is that previously exams have taken around three hours, but the online exams will only last 45 minutes. These tests will focus on topics that most schools will have covered by early March. You can go to the College Board website to see exactly which units will and will not be covered for each subject.

Students will be able to take this test on any device: a smartphone, laptop, desktop, or tablet. Students can also write their answers by hand, take a photograph, and submit the photograph. In terms of earning college credit for these exams, colleges have confirmed that they will accept the scores of these tests in the same way they have in previous years. Another change is that there will now be two test dates, rather than one. [The test schedule, units covered, and information about the test questions can all be found on the College Board's website.](#)

A common reaction to hearing that these tests will be taken at home is the question of cheating and plagiarism. Won't students just be able to look up the answers online or in a textbook? Couldn't they ask someone else to take the test for them? These concerns have been addressed in a number of different ways. First, part of the reason for the shortened test time and eliminating the multiple choice questions is to make cheating more difficult. Students won't have the time to look up, research, and answer free response questions in the limited time. There will also be a remote proctor who will be monitoring students work through the camera of the device they are using. The proctor will have the student's registration information and image to confirm that the student

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taking the test is who registered for it. Also, students' IP addresses will be tracked and there will be a full digital record of each student's testing experience to check for any inconsistencies. Additionally, they will use plagiarism software to assist in detecting plagiarism.

Now, let's move on to the SAT and discuss some of the changes happening with the administration of that test. First, the March tests, including the March 28th makeup date, were cancelled; May test dates have also been cancelled. The next test date that is currently scheduled is June 6th; however, it will be important to continue to monitor the situation and College Board announcements to see whether that changes in the future.

As a result of these changes, some colleges have decided to change to a test optional policy. While many schools have already been moving to a test-optional policy over the last few years, the current situation has motivated even more schools to make this decision. Some schools are saying that adopting a new test-optional policy is temporary. For example, Boston University and Case Western Reserve University will adopt this policy for one year, while Tufts University has decided to adopt it for three years. Other schools, such as University of Oregon, Scripps College, and Chapman University have decided to permanently switch to a test-optional admissions policy.

One particularly significant change is that the University of California has decided to suspend their requirement for SAT/ACT test scores for 2020-21. Students will not be penalized for not submitting a standardized test score. However, if students have already taken the SAT/ACT or if they end up having the opportunity to take the test later in the year, they can choose to submit that score. The rest of the testing requirements for the University of California will stay the same: TOEFL or IELTS tests are required for students who have not had at least three years of English-language instruction, SAT Subject Tests are optional, and AP exams will count toward credit in the same way they have in previous years. One important point to note about this change is that it is only for the upcoming admissions cycle. If you read our January newsletter, you know that the University of California has been considering a test-optional policy and has a faculty committee reviewing that change; however, the decision to suspend the testing requirements for 2020-21 is not related to the possibility of a permanent change in testing requirements in the future.

The final set of tests for us to take a look at is the SAT Subject Tests. If you read our February newsletter, you know that the recent trend has been that schools are requiring fewer subject tests or getting rid of the requirement altogether. Two of the schools I mentioned in my February newsletter that still required the tests were MIT and Harvey Mudd; however, since that newsletter, both Harvey Mudd and MIT have decided to change their policies, and the change is fairly dramatic. Both schools will no longer consider SAT Subject Tests. This policy doesn't mean that it's optional; it means that you cannot submit your scores. While there are still some schools that require the subject tests for certain majors, the trend is moving quickly away from requiring these scores for nearly all US schools.

As we can see, the College Board and colleges across the country are trying to move fast and make the necessary changes during this difficult situation.



Online Classes



Check out our online classes! Taught by our experienced faculty, these classes focus on helping students develop the critical reading and writing skills they need to succeed. Take a look at the brief course descriptions below, and let us know if you would like additional information about any of these courses.

Transformations - This 25-lesson course focuses on building academic writing skills. Through four thematic units, students will explore different aspects of academic writing, putting this knowledge into practice to write a final paper for each unit. Topics covered will include drafting strong thesis statements, writing engaging introductions/conclusions, and incorporating effective revising and editing skills into the writing process..

Foundations - This 16-lesson course is designed to help high school students reinforce the critical reading skills needed to succeed on standardized tests and in college courses of any field. Students will read a variety of texts that cover a range of genres, ranging from natural and social science to literature. Students will also learn how to be active readers, expand their vocabulary, and develop their writing skills as they respond to each text.

Creations - This course prepares high school students for college-level English literature, writing, and humanities classes by reading, critiquing, and writing fiction. Students will explore a wide range of classic and contemporary fiction, analyzing various aspects of those pieces. They will also complete daily creative writing exercises as well as write their own flash fiction and short stories.

Explorations - This 25-lesson course is designed for advanced ESL students who want to develop their academic reading and writing skills, expand their vocabulary, and engage with texts across a wide range of topics. While the focus of this course is writing, students will also have the opportunity to improve other academic skills that are essential to succeeding in higher education and performing well on standardized tests such as TOEFL and IELTS.

Virtual College Sites Reviewed

BY KARA SMITH

Virtual college sites are becoming increasingly popular, as they can be a useful tool for weighing your options and previewing campuses. In addition to being more accessible and allowing students to get a feel for multiple campuses, virtual tours are currently the easiest way for students to visit campuses that are otherwise shutdown due to COVID-19. We've checked out some of the most popular virtual college sites and would like to share our insight about how they could benefit you.

CampusReel - One unique thing about this website is that it has real videos from students that show the quality of the dorms and the campus. Seeing the university from this point of view, as opposed to the professional quality videos that universities normally put out, will help you to get an authentic idea of how your experience would be at the college.

YouVisit - Depending on what you're most interested in, this website breaks things down into categories so you can explore student life, academics, or even residence halls. For academics, you can watch videos from people who have studied subjects that you are also interested in and use their experience as a tool to help you decide if the university is what you are looking for.

CampusTours - While their video services are not as advanced as the previous two websites, CampusTours focuses on building interactive maps and helping students navigate their way around campuses. If you haven't ever been to a particular college campus and want to see what it has to offer, you can use this website's geo-location software to find buildings and businesses that are near to campus and help you get a feel for how campus life would be.

YOUiversity - Last but not least, this website has an interesting feature that lets you break down and view colleges by their overall ranking, region, or even price. If you have a general idea about the type of college you want to attend, but can't decide on the exact university, this could be a great way to simplify your search process while also introducing you to some colleges that you might not have even considered.

If you try any or all of these websites, we would love to hear your thoughts about your likes or dislikes, and which ones are the most beneficial for acquainting students with college campuses.



Establishing Interest in Schools

BY KARA SMITH



In addition to grades and test scores, some college admissions officers will look to see if students have shown enthusiasm towards attending the school. This is known as demonstrated interest, and this signals to the university that you will likely accept their offer. Typically students can demonstrate interest by visiting the campus, attending an information session, or meeting with a local admissions officer. As colleges are closed and formal visits have been postponed for the foreseeable future, we want to share some ways that students can demonstrate their interest in colleges without actually stepping foot on campus.

Email communication and mailing lists - Many colleges use tracking tools that indicate if emails have been opened by the students. By simply opening the emails and even clicking on some of the links that are offered, it could help convey your interest in a school. If you receive any emails from schools that request a reply, be sure to respond in a professional and timely manner. Another good way to keep in touch is to subscribe to the university's mailing list, which can typically be done by going to the admissions page. For example, for the [University of Pennsylvania](#) you can subscribe to their mailing list by going to the Admissions tab, and then selecting "Join the mailing list."

Online forums or ambassadors - Some universities have started setting up online groups to allow students to meet each other virtually. Additionally, some schools have ambassadors who students can engage with and learn more information about the university from those who have experienced it firsthand. Information about these opportunities can normally be found on the university admissions page.

Online events - With a lack of in-person meetings, more universities are offering online alternatives to learn more about the university. Webinars and online meetings could focus on a variety of information from general admissions questions to financial aid. Universities are able to track which prospective students are attending these official online events and can use that to determine the student's engagement, so it would be beneficial for students to attend some of these events. Information about upcoming events can be found on the university's website.

Although not always ideal, there are still plenty of online ways that students can demonstrate interest in their university of choice.