

# LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020



## WILL COLLEGE CAMPUSES OPEN IN THE FALL?

It's frustrating that no one definitely knows yet if college campuses will be open in the fall or if online education will predominate or there will be some hybrid of the two scenarios.

In the interim, however, The Chronicle of Higher Education has been regularly updating a list of tentative plans that colleges and universities have publicly shared.

[Check out the list](#) from The Chronicle that will continue to grow. (Much of The Chronicle's editorial content is behind a paywall, but this is an exception.)

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Will College Campuses Open  
in the Fall?

---

Testing Updates

---

UC Guidelines Adjusted

---

Colleges Refuse to Issue  
Tuition Refunds - What Does  
This Mean for Admissions?

---

Using Literature to Improve  
Testing

---

Some schools have said that they won't make a final decision about what to do, at least regarding the fall semester, until June or July.

Stanford, George Washington Emory universities are among the institutions that say they expect to make a decision in May; University of Colorado, University of South Carolina, University of Virginia, Cornell, University of Texas, George Mason and Williams College expect to announce in June; while Yale is going to wait until early July.

According to The Chronicle, here are some institutions that have announced that they are at least tentatively planning on in-person classes:

- Boston University (leaning toward in-person classes)
- Brown University
- California Baptist University
- Chapman University
- Christopher Newport University
- Claremont colleges: Pomona, Claremont McKenna, Scripps Pitzer, Harvey Mudd
- Drury College
- Haverford College
- Iowa public universities
- Merrimack College
- Montana State University
- North Carolina State University
- Ohio State University (leaning towards in-person classes)
- Purdue University
- University of Alabama
- University of Arizona
- University of Central Florida (leaning towards in-person classes)
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Maine system
- University of Nebraska
- University of Oklahoma system
- University of Maryland system
- Utah public universities
- Wake Forest University
- Washington State University
- William Jewell College

According to a [survey](#) of public and private college presidents that was released April 27 by Inside Higher Ed, nearly half of colleges expect to open in the fall with in-person instruction, sports programs and dining halls operating.

Here are some of the scenarios that colleges have been talking about:



## **Open campuses in the fall**

Colleges would open their campuses in the fall with pandemic precautions. For instance, a university might offer courses that normally are held in large lecture halls on an online platform instead. The University of Maryland system has said that some larger classes could be online.

Some universities have said the larger auditoriums usually reserved for big lecture courses could be used for smaller classes that allows students to observe social distancing.

In [an op-ed in The New York Times](#) on April 26, Christina Paxson, the president of Brown University, wrote that she is “cautiously optimistic” that campuses can reopen in the fall if careful planning is done.

Paxson said it would be catastrophic for colleges to remain closed in the fall. If colleges remain closed in the fall, Paxson argued:

*This loss, only a part of which might be recouped through online courses, would be catastrophic, especially for the many institutions that were in precarious financial positions before the pandemic. It's not a question of whether institutions will be forced to permanently close, it's how many.*

Here are what Paxson said are necessary for colleges to reopen campuses:

**Rapid testing.** There must be rapid coronavirus tests for all returning students and then retesting at regular intervals throughout the year.

**Contact tracing.** Traditional contact tracing won't work because students won't necessarily know who they came in contact with in lecture halls, cafeteria and parties. What's needed is digital contact tracing that can track students via their phone apps.

**Separation.** Students who do test positive and those who have been exposed would need to be isolated and quarantined. This might require hotel rooms to accommodate these students.

**Modified college life.** Sports might be played in empty stadiums. Parties may be virtual. Large classes may remain online. Concert halls would need to be partially empty during performances.

Colleges remain online in fall or for 2020-2021

Colleges are making plans in case courses must be held online at least in the fall.

Conducting one or two semesters online and then returning to “normal” in the fall of 2021 with a vaccine available is a possibility.

Some schools are doing block-scheduling courses in shorter segments to allow more flexibility in case remote learning is necessary.

### **Delay beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.**

Stanford is one of the institutions that is exploring getting a later start on the school year. It is considering delaying the first quarter until the winter.

### **Hybrid instruction for one or two semesters.**

Smaller number of students would attend campus at any one time. Students will rotate between in-person classes and distance learning

# TESTING UPDATES

BY: CLAIRE SCHADLER



Since our last newsletter, new updates have been announced for standardized testing and admissions requirements.

As many of you know, the June SAT date has been cancelled. Currently, the next available date is August 29th, and in addition to the already scheduled October, November, and December dates, the College Board has added a new September date for the SAT. On the September date, only the SAT will be offered, not the subject tests. The College Board has also announced that if they are unable to offer these fall dates, they will provide an at-home option, similar to this year's AP exams. Of course there are many concerns about the fairness and validity of at-home exams. People are worried about access to computers and reliable internet service, cheating, and privacy issues surrounding the proctoring technology. Despite these concerns, the College Board has stated they will ensure that the tests are fair and valid; however, there remains skepticism.

The ACT was also cancelled for April, and the next available test dates are currently scheduled for June 13th and July 18th. In the event that they need to cancel these in-person test dates, they will also be offering at-home exams. In response to these cancellations and the possibility of at-home exams, many colleges are continuing to transition to a test optional policy for admissions. Cornell became the first Ivy League school to go test optional. As with other test-optional schools, Cornell will accept test scores, but students will not be penalized if they don't submit them. Cornell has stated that this policy will only be in place for this year and that for applicants who are unable to submit test scores, admissions readers will be looking closely for other indications of academic success, such as challenging course loads, high grades, letters of recommendations, and admissions essays. While there isn't a current and comprehensive list of all the schools that have changed to a test-optional policy, University of Washington, Swarthmore, Northeastern, and Pomona are a few more schools that have decided to go test optional. Claremont McKenna College has also decided to go test optional, but they have gone a step further and said they will not accept the at-home SAT or ACT test score.

As changes are happening quickly, I am sure the list of schools moving to test-optional policies will continue to expand as we move through the summer.



# UC ANNOUNCES ADJUSTMENTS TO GUIDELINES IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

BY: SHIRLEY YOUNG

In the wake of COVID-19 and all the changes to daily life that this pandemic has brought about, one sector that has been hit with a good deal of uncertainty is that of the academic world. University admissions teams around the nation right now are working hard to reconsider how they will change the guidelines by which they consider the profiles of students affected by the current situation. There are several issues to take into consideration in regards to how students' performances have been affected, such as the constraints that shelter-in-place orders have placed upon extracurricular involvement opportunities like volunteering and club participation, the lessened availability of educational resources, and drastic changes to schools' grading systems. In this article we will explore how the University of California system has made changes to their admissions requirements to help students in the wake of COVID-19.

In late March 2020, the UC Board of Regents announced that they were implementing temporary measures to relax admissions requirements for students planning to enroll at a UC school for Fall 2020 and beyond (the number of years that these changes would be in effect for is as of yet undetermined). John A. Perez, chair of the Board of Regents, made the following announcement:

*"We want to help alleviate the tremendous disruption and anxiety that is already overwhelming prospective students due to COVID-19. By removing artificial barriers and decreasing stressors - including suspending the use of the SAT - for this unprecedented moment in time, we hope there will be less worry for our future students. The University's flexibility at this crucial time will ensure prospective students aiming for UC get a full and fair shot - no matter their current challenges."*

As many of you are aware, many schools in the region and beyond have temporarily switched to a Pass/Fail grading system instead of a letter grade system. This is something that will have an impact on students' GPAs. Also, the College Board and ACT have both suspended their next few test sittings, with the first ones available tentatively planned for the fall. These, along with the other issues mentioned above, are all being taken into consideration by UC's planning committee. It should provide students and their families some sense of comfort, then, to know that the following are some of the measures the UC Board of Regents has recently released to address the disruptions caused by COVID-19:

- The UCs have decided to suspend the letter grade requirement for A-G courses completed in the Winter, Spring, and Summer 2020 terms for all students, including recently admitted freshmen.
- There is no longer a standardized test requirement for students applying for Fall 2021 freshman admission.
- The UCs will continue granting UC credit for scores of 3, 4, or 5 on 2020 AP exams, despite changes to the AP exam content and formatting for Spring 2020 by the College Board.

All of these new decisions are meant to provide a measure of comfort to students and their families during this stressful time. The UCs recognize that with so many things being thrown into disarray, students may find it difficult to express their interests and strengths to the best of their abilities. We expect that many other universities will follow in UC's footsteps and release similarly relaxed guidelines for students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

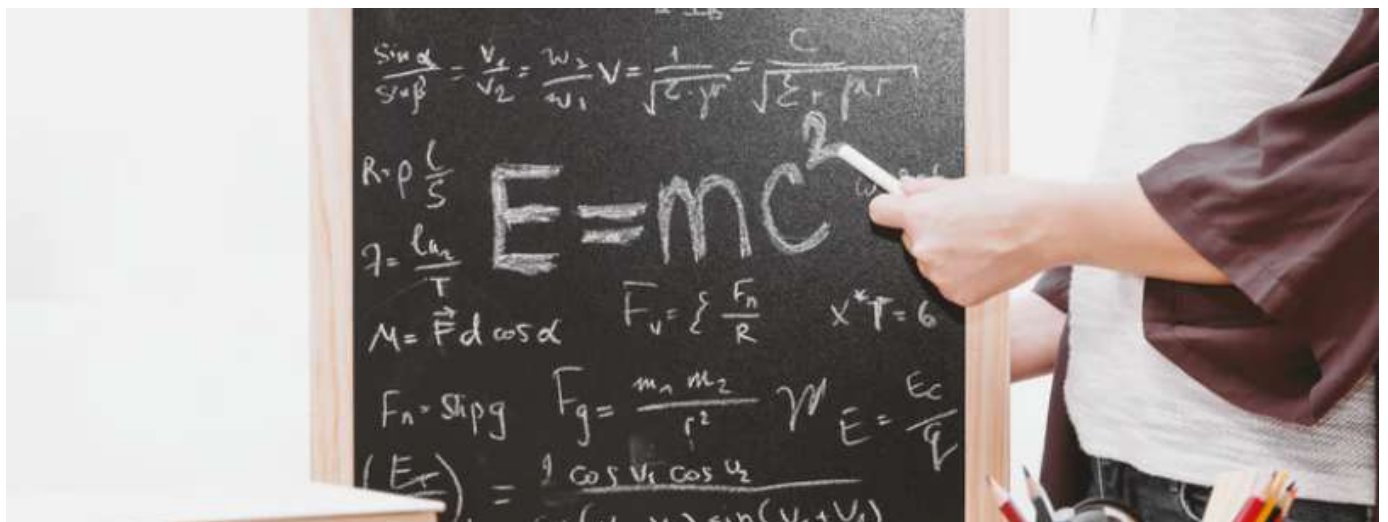
# COLLEGES COME UNDER FIRE FOR REFUSING TO ISSUE TUITION REFUNDS - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FUTURE ADMISSIONS CYCLES?

BY: SHIRLEY YOUNG

The incoming college freshman class of Fall 2020 is heading into their college years at a time of tumultuous changes and great uncertainty. Confusion on how to navigate the circumstances brought about by COVID-19 abounds on both sides of the picture, and both students and college officials are struggling to figure out how to maintain balance during a time when re-evaluating and implementing new rules is required on an almost daily basis.

One fight that is being waged between these two parties across the nation is that of students demanding tuition refunds for the semester (or more) that they are no longer able to attend but have already paid for, for reasons such as safety concerns or loss of income. More and more students are considering the possibility of taking a gap year and beginning their studies in Fall 2021. This matter has sparked fierce debate in courts, with many schools being sued for either refusing or for not being able to grant these refunds. On one hand, students are enraged at being forced to pay full fees even though classes have been moved online and campus facilities are closed. On the other hand, colleges argue that students made a commitment to attend these schools when they submitted Statements of Intent to Register (SIR), typically due during the month of May in senior year. They also argue that this trend could have devastating financial consequences for colleges not just this year, but into the future as well. In any given year, admissions officers expect a certain number of students who have committed to a college to not end up enrolling eventually, a phenomenon known as "summer melt." This year, consulting firm Art & Science Group polled over 1,000 high school seniors between April 21-24 and found that a whopping 12% of students who have already made deposits to schools were no longer planning to attend.

It's certainly a hotly debated topic with ramifications on many different fronts, and the full effects of this situation still remain to be seen. Currently, some of the hardest hit students are from a minority demographic, would-be first generation students, and international students. Colleges are already trying to mitigate the loss of a good portion of their incoming student body by extending their decision and tuition deposit windows. It seems likely, too, that more students than in previous years will be taken off the waitlist and given an acceptance. As for what this might mean for future admission cycles, we predict that colleges may cast their nets wider and allow for a more gracious admissions process, in the hopes of retaining more full-time tuition students to help mitigate their financial troubles.



# USING LITERATURE TO IMPROVE TESTING

BY: KARA SMITH

With the uncertainty of COVID-19, students around the globe have been feeling the long term effects of a less-structured school day and fewer requirements for required reading. While it might not be possible to go to a bookstore or library for the foreseeable future, one thing that students can do to utilize their free time is to add in some supplementary reading. We want to offer you some recommended reads that students can both enjoy, and use to help them improve their vocabulary and test taking skills. Reading classical stories or well-written bestsellers can help students familiarize themselves with the type of passages and vocabulary that they will likely see on the SAT and ACT, and will ultimately help them improve their scores. As an added bonus for those students who will be applying to colleges in the fall, you will already be prepared to answer the common admission questions of "What are some books that you have recently read for pleasure?" Colleges are often interested in newspapers and periodicals that students are reading as well, so try to take advantage of this time to expand your catalog of knowledge.

If you're not sure where to begin or what books to turn to, here are some recommended reads that are a mix of bestsellers, periodicals and classics.

## **Bestsellers**

*The Dutch House* by Ann Pratchett  
*Educated* by Tara Westover  
*Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng  
*High Achiever* by Tiffany Jenkins  
*Good Enough* by Jen Petro-Roy  
*The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller  
*Know My Name* by Chanel Miller  
*The Moment of Lift* by Melinda Gates  
*The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen  
*All the Light We Cannot See* by Doerr Anthony  
*Atomic Habits* by James Clear  
*The Secret Lives of Color* by Kassia St. Clair  
*47 Days* by Annette Oppenlander

## **Fiction Suggested Authors/Books**

*Animal Farm* by George Orwell  
*Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut  
*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe  
*The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas  
*The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* by Michael Chabon  
*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley  
*The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka  
*Native Son* by Richard Wright  
*Catch-22* by Joseph Heller  
*Beloved* by Toni Morrison  
*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley  
*Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin



## **Newspapers and Magazines**

New York Times  
The Economist  
Scientific American  
National Geographic  
Newsweek  
Time Magazine  
Smithsonian Magazine  
The Atlantic Monthly  
Wired