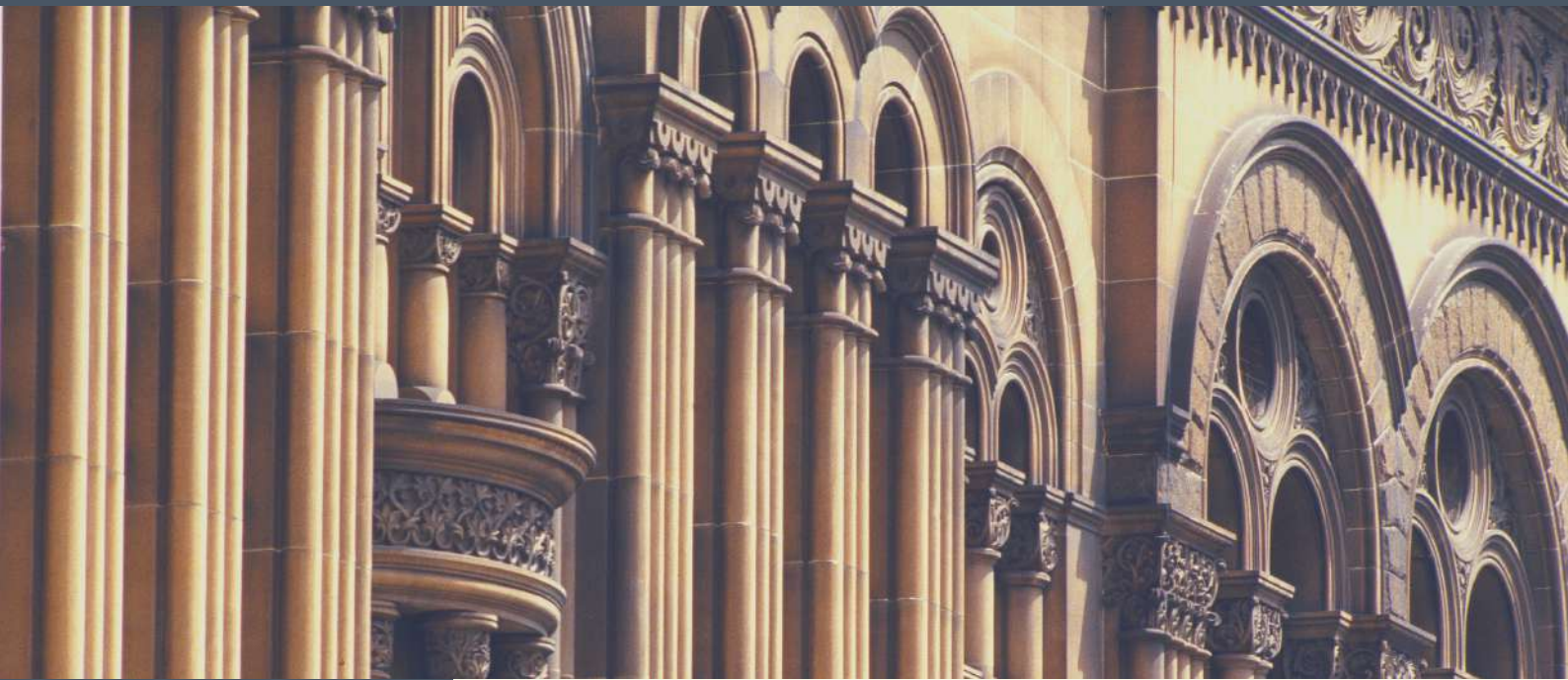


SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

FROM LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING



APPLICATION STRATEGIES: PART 1 OF 2

BY KARA SMITH

The school year is back in swing, and the attention of most students has turned from developing EAs to actually building and submitting their college applications. It might seem unfair, but much of a student's admissibility to a particular school is determined by the plan under which they apply, and not necessarily by their grades and test scores. In this post, we'll be focusing on Regular Decision (RD) and Early Decision (ED) and how to utilize them to your advantage.

Regular Decision

RD is the most common admission plan, and every school offers this. Even when a school provides students with the option to apply under ED or EA, there is still an RD plan. RD is completely straightforward, and essentially tells students the following: "Get the application in by this date if you want your application to be read." The school that most students

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SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER
LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING

CHECK OUT WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE:

- EA/ED APPLICATION STRATEGIES
- SENDING TEST SCORES TO COLLEGES
- THE BEST UC ESSAYS
- FOR UNDERCLASSMEN: SAT READING



are acquainted with that offers RD is the University of California. November 30th is the application deadline, and students who submit their application after this date are simply not considered. If students apply earlier than November 30, they receive no advantage in the admission process. Similarly, New York University offers an ED plan with a deadline of November 1. The RD deadline, though, is January 1.

Early Decision

Perhaps the most significant decision a student can make in the college application process will be if they apply ED. To provide some issues and statistics pertaining to ED:

1. If they're admitted, they must attend this school.
2. Students may apply to just one school ED, but this does not impact the number of RD schools to which they can apply.
3. Applying ED provides students with a significant statistical advantage in the application process. For instance, Vanderbilt University admitted only 9.6% of its applicants last year. For ED, the admit rate goes up to 26%. Johns Hopkins University's ED acceptance rate is more than double that of its RD rate. Some of this is attributable to "more qualified" students applying ED. However, this fact cannot account for the whole advantage.
4. Schools will frequently accept up to 40% of their freshman class from the ED applicant pool.

Thus, a student receives a significant advantage by applying ED to a school that offers the program. Further, students are at a significant disadvantage when they apply RD to a school that offers ED. So many of the slots have been filled with the ED applicants that room for RD students is limited.

However, a student should not apply ED solely for statistical reasons. Remember, if a student applies ED, they are basically required to attend this school. The college might not have any legal recourse against the student if they do not attend, but you can be sure that students from this high school will be at a significant disadvantage for the coming years if the student backs out of the ED agreement.

Furthermore, students should apply to the right school when they apply ED. Students can apply to just one school ED. With that in mind, a student with a 3.6 GPA and a 1200 on the SAT should think twice before applying ED to Penn; with these numbers, they'll almost certainly be denied (other factors, of course, notwithstanding). Additionally, applying ED to Penn would prevent them from applying ED to Northeastern University – a school they have a legitimate chance of admission with the bonus they earn from ED.

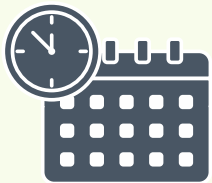
The Final Word: Strategize!

One of the most important things a student can do when applying for colleges is to plan ahead and think through their options. You should begin thinking about your approach now in order to increase the odds of acceptance as much as possible.

For our next post, we'll discuss some of the more peculiar application plans: Rolling Admission, Early Action, and Early Decision II. In the meantime, begin exploring schools that offer ED. Your odds of acceptance will be enhanced and, if you're admitted, you won't have to deal with the pressure of waiting for acceptance letters come spring.

SENDING TEST SCORES TO COLLEGES: IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND REMINDERS

BY SHIRLEY YOUNG



As we head firmly into the fall semester, important tasks relating to the college applications are quickly starting to line up. One important component that is critical to ensuring that an application is marked complete is making sure to send in test scores (SAT/ACT and SAT II) on time. In last month's newsletter, we addressed colleges that allow students to self-report their test scores, and how to do so. In this month's edition, we will address what to do for colleges that require test scores to be sent in, whether that's through the College Board (for SAT/SAT II) or ACT.org (for the ACT).

One question that we get fairly often is: should students wait until after their applications are submitted to send in their test scores? The answer is, absolutely not. Even if a student were to send in test scores well before he or she submits the application, those test scores would just get added to the student's file; they do not get tossed out. Even beyond that, many schools require the test scores to come in by (or very slightly after) the application deadline, so if the student were to wait until after the application has been submitted before ordering test scores to be sent, those scores would arrive at the colleges much too late.

Now, on the topic of deadlines, it is important to be aware that schools will have different requirements for when the test scores need to get in. Most schools are going to be fine with the test scores arriving a little bit (about a week or so) after their deadlines. However, there are a few rare schools out there which demand that the test scores arrive by the deadline, and the application is unfortunately considered incomplete and voided if the test scores have not made their way to the school by that hard deadline. Two of the more common schools that have this policy are University of Michigan and U. Texas - Austin.

Please check out the following list of important application deadlines to be aware of, and keep in mind that any test scores should preferably get in before or right after these deadlines:

- 10/15 Georgia Tech's EA deadline
- 11/1 Most other schools' EA/ED deadline
- 11/15 University of Washington's deadline
- 11/30 UC deadline
- 12/1 Boston University and USC's scholarship deadline
- 1/1 Most other schools' deadlines

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Lastly, please be aware that it can take two to three weeks for test scores to arrive at colleges after they are ordered. Take this processing time into consideration when sending out test scores, as colleges look at when scores are received, not when they are sent. This can pose a problem for students applying EA or ED to schools and are planning on taking tests in October, as they may not have a chance to wait for test scores to come out, take a look at them, and then finally send the scores to their colleges. In this case, students will need to make a call on how comfortable they are with their October tests, and decide whether or not they want to have them sent out to the colleges, sight unseen. Remember, however, that this only affects the schools that both require everything in by the early deadline and require that test scores be submitted (as in, schools participating in self-reporting are exempt from this problem).

Between mid-September and mid-October, I will be meeting with each student individually to go over the logistics of sending out their test scores and transcripts to the colleges. In the meantime, please start considering whether you would like to just send out your test scores to all colleges, or whether you'd like to only send them out to the ones who require submitted test scores.

As always, let us know any questions you might have!

Information Sessions and High School Visits: Should You Attend?

BY EDDIE LAMEIRE

As September arrives and school starts, the college admissions travel season begins, too. Over the next month, then, upperclassmen will be inundated with emails and mailers promoting university information sessions, college fairs, and visits to local high schools. Should students and families attend these events?

For the most part, yes! If a student has the opportunity to make contact with a school, they should take advantage of it. Let's review why students should attend these events, which ones are worthwhile, and how students should present themselves.

First, why should students make contact with universities in which they have an interest? Because that "demonstrated interest" (DI) might make a difference in the admissions decision. The more contact the student has with a school, the thinking goes, the more likely a school will be to accept the student, as the student will be more likely to enroll if accepted.

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Does this hold true with every school? No. Most big public universities (UC largely included) ignore DI, as do most fancy top 20 colleges. Some schools, like Carnegie Mellon, have phased out DI as an admissions factor, as they felt it was favoring wealthier students. However, most other privates outside of the top 20 -- from USC to Northeastern to University of San Francisco -- will track DI and use it in their decisions.

So, as colleges travel through the area, what is the best way to establish DI?

Information Sessions. Throughout the coming months, universities will host presentations on their schools, typically in a convention center or hotel ballroom, for high school students of all grade levels. Tufts University, for instance, has a few in mid-September, one at a hotel and another at a school. Colleges promote these events to students via email and through high school counseling offices. Of course, they will have this information available on their admissions websites, too.

If a school in which you have an interest is visiting, register and attend! Face time with admissions officers (AO) will be highly limited, but the main point is simply going to the event.

College Fairs. Even though college fairs are usually spring events, there are still some in the fall. And, they're a good way to develop contact with a large number of schools at once. All grade levels can attend the fairs, although pre-seniors might get a bit more out of them at this time of year. Two rather large fairs are coming up in September: The San Francisco Visual and Performing Arts Fair (September 19) and the Silicon Valley STEM Fair (October 6). Again, face time with an AO will be limited, but there is more opportunity to interact with them. If you get along well with an AO after asking a few questions, request a business card and follow up with an email.

High School Visits. These events, designed primarily for seniors, are where you will get the most personal interaction with an AO over the fall. You can find which schools will be visiting your high school on your Naviance page (if the high school uses Naviance), or through announcements from the counseling office. These visits involve presentations, usually in the library or counseling office. Students get passes to leave class, and they sit with other students listening to the presentations and asking questions. At the end of the meeting, students will often filter to the front of the room, and ask individual questions to the AO. Here, if you'd like, is an opportunity to introduce yourself, and even to give the AO a resume, if you know you'll apply. Again, get a business card or email address and follow up with a thank you.

Is it necessary to attend every event that a school hosts? Not at all. The student should attend a visit to their high school if they can, but outside of this, the contact they have with the college is all a matter of preference. And, again, DI is not used everywhere.

However, it is getting to the point in the world of college admissions where colleges are having trouble determining which students will attend if admitted. The tougher this becomes, the more some schools will turn to DI to "tip" admission decisions. Ultimately, it's better to be safe than sorry.



FOR UNDERCLASSMEN

SAT READING

BY CLAIRE SCHADLER

When preparing for the Reading section of the SAT test, there are a number of approaches that students can take. Reviewing the different genres that will be present on the SAT is a great first step. Students should be comfortable with historical documents, literature, social science, and natural science passages. Next, students should familiarize themselves with the types of questions that they will find in the reading section, including main idea, purpose, inference, detail, and vocabulary questions. Finally, students should make sure to take enough practice tests that they are comfortable with the format, timing, and content of the test. What else can students do to prepare themselves for the reading section of the SAT? Of course, the obvious answer is read! But where should students focus their attention in order to prepare themselves as effectively as possible for the SAT? As I already mentioned, becoming familiar with the different genres that will be on the SAT can help students immensely. For example, if students need extra help with the natural science passages, they may want to spend a short amount of time (about 30 minutes every day) reading The New York Time Science Section, National Geographic, or Scientific American. Students may want to check out some well-known science authors such as Brian Greene, Stephen Hawking, or Daniel Levitin in order to build a foundation of knowledge in these areas and become more comfortable with the topics they will encounter on the test. While background knowledge isn't required in order to understand an SAT passage, it can certainly help students feel more comfortable with the material and the vocabulary associated with any given topic. If students need extra help with social science passages, they can focus their attention on The



Economist, Newsweek, Time Magazine, or The Atlantic Monthly. Social Science authors that may interest them include Malcolm Gladwell and Daniel Kahneman. For the literature section of the test, students can read any number of fiction writers, but for those looking for recommendations they can look into books by Jhumpa Lahiri, Michael Chabon, or Toni Morrison. Finally, one of the most challenging parts of the Reading section is the historical document section. The language in these documents is often more formal and archaic than students are used to. In order to prepare for this section of the test, students should become familiar with the writings of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglas, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham

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Lincoln, and Susan B. Anthony, among others. While reading any of these texts, students should work on being active readers, thinking critically about the main idea, supporting evidence, and purpose of the text. While vocabulary isn't tested out of context on the SAT, having a vocabulary log where students write down unknown words in order to build their vocabulary about unfamiliar topics will also serve them well when it comes to taking the SAT. Spending a little time every day on developing these reading strategies and creating a foundation of content knowledge will help students reach their SAT goals!

Suggested Reading



Natural Science

The New York Time Science Section
National Geographic
Scientific American
Brian Greene
Stephen Hawking
Daniel Levitin

Historical Documents

Benjamin Franklin
Thomas Jefferson
Frederick Douglas
Harriet Beecher Stowe
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Abraham Lincoln
Susan B. Anthony

Social Science

The Economist
Newsweek
Time Magazine
The Atlantic Monthly
Malcolm Gladwell
Daniel Kahneman

Literature

Jhumpa Lahiri
Michael Chabon
Toni Morrison