

JUNIOR WEBINAR Q&A

January 13, 2021

Is there housing at community colleges? Yes, there is housing at several of the CC's and you can find more information in the College Planning Guide here: <https://www.tamdistrict.org/Page/7921> - Please note that this Guide is currently being updated and you'll be notified by email when the new version is available.

How are colleges deciding admissions if there is no testing? College admissions utilizes a variety of factors for admissions decisions. For the UC system, please review these [UC Comprehensive Review](#) factors. For many private colleges, the factors include the writing samples students provide, athletics, performance abilities (drama, musical instrument, vocal), community involvement, leadership, and demonstrated ability in a future major. Each college will have their admissions criteria outlined on their website, so start your research.

Will the UCs look at AP exams? Yes, AP scores are part of the [admissions criteria](#).

I wanna go to Arizona State University; is it good? ASU may be the perfect fit for you. It all depends on your personal college criteria. It's good to have an idea of what you are hoping to gain from your university experience and then see if ASU is a good match for your interests and goals. There are very few bad colleges out there. The four years of college is really dependent on the energy and enthusiasm you put into your experience. If you work hard, make good connections and take advantage of academic opportunities, your experience will be positive. By the way, ASU has an honors college, with research and internship opportunities starting freshman year. That is also something to look into.

In college (not a community college) do you start with a clean slate for grades? Four year colleges use your high school transcript as one of the factors to determine eligibility for admission. Once you begin college, you start a whole new transcript. Those college grades will be used to determine eligibility for post-graduate work, which is additional college study beyond your Bachelor's degree (i.e., law school, master's degree, medical school, etc.)

In community college, do you start with a clean slate for grades? Yes, as you will use the CC transcript when you apply to a 4 year college to transfer. They will want to see your college transcript and know how you performed at the college level. Your high school transcript will be in the archives.

Does going to community college first increase your chances of getting into other four year colleges that aren't UC schools? Yes, if your performance improves from high school and demonstrates readiness for the curriculum. Remember, community college is college and the coursework is advanced. However, you will be a year older and wiser. Generally speaking, if you continue to mature and study wisely, your performance will continue to improve.

Is the C or higher grades for all classes including elective classes? You must earn a C or higher for all college preparatory courses which are used to determine eligibility for four year college admission. All of the courses on the UC a-g list require C or higher grades. Most of the courses taught here are college preparatory; however, PE and Social Issues are not used for college admissions. If you earned a D in a course and are unsure what category it falls into, please email your counselor and we will help you out.

Do we need to do the tasks on naviance to graduate? No, those tools are there to help you with self-discovery. It is always good to know more about yourself when making major life decisions and this site has lots of useful information to help you do just that. You will, however, be required to complete the Senior Survey on Naviance in May of your senior year.

Is gym considered an academic course? Nope.

Is there one application for CSU's? Is Cal Poly included? All 23 CSU campuses use one application (Cal State Apply) and there's a place to indicate which individual campuses you want your application sent.

FEELING HOPELESS FROM COVID

What if I sat around and watched TV during COVID and didn't really do anything of an extracurricular nature - will I still be able to go to college? Yes, you will. College admissions folks understand that this has been an unprecedented experience for the entire globe and it is not easy to manage all of the stress of this experience at your age. There will still be options and opportunities for you to apply and gain admission if you meet the criteria for the colleges on your list. And remember, the community college system is a terrific option for everyone, and you don't have to worry about grades, SAT/ACT or extracurricular activities to enroll!

What would you say to students who feel hopeless and overwhelmed about college and applying to college? You are not alone. This has been such a strange experience for most of us and we are all trying to figure out how to manage. That being said, life is long. You have 75 more years to get an education and figure things out, so be kind to yourself, be patient, and rest assured that you will have the opportunity to continue your education for many more years. Maybe you will benefit from a break or gap year. Maybe starting at the JC and only taking a few classes each semester will help you over the hump. Or maybe you will apply to some four year colleges and feel renewed energy when the world starts to open back up again. No matter what you decide, college is always there waiting for you.

FINANCIAL AID: Is there contact information for student financial assistance? Please contact Lisa Neumaier (ineumaier@tamdistrict.org) or your counselor to ask your specific financial assistance questions.

Will you ever need to get a letter of rec from a teacher? Yes, if you are planning to apply to four year colleges using the Common Application. Most of those schools require letters of recommendation from 1-2 teachers. Those teachers should be chosen from your junior or senior year courses which are most challenging and/or in your intended field of study. Some colleges will also accept letters of recommendation from other folks outside of the classroom (i.e., athletic coach, dance instructor, pastor, rabbi, job supervisor, intern supervisor, etc.).

When do we apply for ASB if interested? For ASB, Leadership, Peer Resource and STAAR, listen for the CREW announcements in February. For purposes of scheduling, sign up for the class you would like to take if you are not admitted into the program you apply to.

If I were to take a gap year, would I still apply next fall and just differ or apply when I am ready to go to college? We recommend still applying to four-year colleges next fall so you understand that process and get the help from us that you may need. You could then try and defer a year if your top choice college allows you to do so. The CSUs and UCs usually do not allow for deferrals except in rare instances.

How long does it take to upload your applications and when will we get to know about the decision? That depends on how many colleges you apply to and how many different application portals you use. If you apply Early Action or Early Decision, you generally hear back by December. Otherwise, you hear back by March or April for most colleges.

In senior year will you have a lot of classes or will you focus on applications? College admissions recommends that seniors maintain a rigorous academic course load their senior year. That being said, having a free period that you dedicate to college applications is sometimes a good idea, especially if you are applying to private colleges that require many writing supplements.

If you don't know what career you want or the one thing you really want to pursue how should you figure out where to go and what to do for college? Does college need to align with what you want to do with your life? There are other factors to consider when creating your college list, including location, enrollment size of the school, special programs offered on campus, cost of college, athletics, etc. See this page for important questions to ask yourself as you research college: <https://www.tamdistrict.org/Page/12957>

What are some extracurriculars that we can do from home that you recommend? These are a few things juniors have shared that they have done during COVID: filmmaking, making podcasts, learn a musical instrument, learning a language, baking bread, cooking meals, taking care of brother/sisters/cousins, mountain biking, hiking, surfing, reading lots of great literature, origami, cleaning up trash in their neighborhood, gardening, making art, learning to sew, knit or crochet, learning calligraphy, calling old folks in senior living homes who are lonely, and dancing. Think of something that would relax you and bring you joy during these strange times and try it out. Ask your friends what they are doing. Teenagers have super ideas:)

I saw that some colleges look at your class rank, would that be information that would be available to me? We no longer rank students and don't provide a rank to colleges.

Is there somewhere you can see all classes senior year before the home access page becomes available? On the Counseling website, we have a page with [Course Offerings](#). Right now, these are from last year, and will be updated soon, but they are mostly accurate.

If you have a passion for something that would be considered an elective or extracurricular or hobby, should you go to college for a career with education on that hobby or realistically go for a career that could potentially support that hobby? Wow, that's a tough question, as oftentimes the thing folks believe to be a hobby, but that they are passionate about, can turn into an amazing career and life adventure. Your counselor would need to know more about this hobby, but pursuing things we are passionate about is one of the things that makes life joyful and worthwhile.

Where is a good place to look for gap year opportunities? Check out this site: <https://www.gooverseas.com/gap-year/usa-fairs>

Can you go to a community college and university at the same time? Like if you apply to a UC then ask to go to a community college then transfer later? You can apply to a UC and decide that you prefer to start at a community college, but you would not take courses at both schools simultaneously.

Where on the Drake/1327 page can I find future college visits? These will be listed on Naviance.

Can I still sign up for a class at COM for this semester before the end of January? Yes, classes begin soon, so please connect with them right away.

How does AP testing work? Will it look better on college apps if you have more than 2? AP exams are given in the spring. Generally, students take the exam that corresponds with a class they took during that school year (i.e., AP US History students take the US History exam). Some students will take exams in courses they have an aptitude for but did not take an AP course in (i.e., World History). What looks good for college admissions is taking the AP exam if you took the AP course and earning a passing score (3 or higher). However, college admissions wants you to take the exam even if you don't earn a passing score as it demonstrates that you have taken the course seriously and are willing to try something new and challenging. We encourage students to take AP courses that they are interested in or have an aptitude for. We discourage taking more than two AP courses in any given year based on the fact that they are college level courses and we don't want you to feel stressed out.

if my grades weren't so great sophomore year, will the rest of my years make up for it? Everyone defines "not so great" differently, so I will use the example of a student with all A-C grades except one D in a college prep class, whose GPA has gone from a 3.4 to a 3.6 and is

steadily climbing upward. This student is taking two academic electives in addition to the regular academic caseload. In this case, the GPA trajectory is positive and improving and that would be looked upon favorably. The academic electives in science and art strengthen the transcript as well. The D grade is one that may need to be remediated if it is in a required class, but would not need to be retaken if not required. If a student's GPA went in the opposite direction, that would not be so positive. The transcript I am using as an example to answer this question looks good and there will be many college options for this student.

Can you apply to Ivy League schools after attending community college and what is the acceptance rate? You can apply to any school in the US, but you must contact their admissions office to ask for requirements to transfer as well as acceptance rates, as we do not have that information for the thousands of colleges across the country.

Why is it important to have a resume, what's on that and who looks at it? Having a resume is a great way to organize many of the facets of your life that you may forget when fall of senior year rolls around and you are completing applications. You can add jobs, community service, skills, internships, family responsibilities and future goals. If you are using it for paid employment, it is a good one page overview for prospective employers to see what makes you a great candidate for employment. It is also helpful to share with your counselor if you want them to write a letter of recommendation for you, as it outlines many of your attributes and experiences for us to highlight in our letter.

Do you have a better chance of getting into college if you already know what major you want to do? For most schools, the answer is no. However, for some schools knowing your major is a requirement, for instance, Cal Poly requires you to choose a major when applying. Also, some colleges are looking for folks who know they want to become scientists or engineers (i.e., Colorado School of Mines), and you begin taking courses in those areas during your freshman year.

Is it true that if you do early action before senior year those colleges won't see your senior year grades? If you apply Early Action (which means that you apply by the EA deadline, you are not committed to attending, and you will receive an admissions decision early), your colleges will make an admissions decision before seeing fall semester senior year grades. Many of these schools will request R1 or R2 grades for fall of senior year, and all of these schools will expect you to maintain the level of rigor and grades that you have been earning throughout high school. If you apply Early Decision (which means that you apply by the ED deadline, you ARE committed to attending that one school and rescinding all other college applications, and you receive an admissions decision early) then the same information applies in terms of grades. Just want to make sure you all understand that Early Decision is BINDING so you need to know that this is the one and only college you want to attend if accepted, whereas Early Action allows you to apply, get an early decision, but perhaps choose a different college to attend. Early Action is not binding.

[TESTING INFORMATION: SAT/ACT/PSAT/NATIONAL MERIT](#)

Will UCs continue to be test blind throughout 2022? Yes they will.

When will in person testing be available? We wish we knew, so you will have to continue to check the websites for updates.

Will there be SAT in person tests any time soon? I have a test scheduled for March and I don't know if it will be canceled. Unfortunately, we don't know so you'll just have to keep checking the College Board's website and stay on top of any communications they send you.

Do we have any updates about the act and sat? I feel like it's unsafe to take it due to the current condition of the pandemic. I know not all schools are test optional this year so what do you do if you are not able to take them? If it's not safe to take a test or there are no local sites open, colleges will understand that and not penalize you for not submitting a test score with your application.

Is the National Merit Scholarship for state schools only? The National Merit Scholarship awards a few different scholarships that can be used at any college in the U.S. There are also college-sponsored awards that you can use at these [colleges](#). For more information, see their [website](#).

What score do you need to qualify for national merit? The PSAT/NMSQT is the qualifying test for entry to the competition for National Merit scholarships. Qualifying scores vary from state to state and from year to year, but the scores of all Semifinalists are extremely high.

Would it be a bad idea to not take the SAT or the ACT all together? Since we don't know what the testing policy will be for each college, you may want to register for an official exam in case it's safe down the road to take it and one of your colleges requires it.

How can we sign up for the practice sat/act in feb or april? Scroll down this page to find the spring dates and the Google form to complete as your registration:
<https://www.tamdistrict.org/Page/7831>

Does UCLA require a SAT/ACT score and will joining the navy guarantee my chances of going to a desired college? The UC's do not require test scores and the only guarantee to get into a college is the Community College [TAG program](#), which guarantees admission to many of the UC's based on grades on the [IGETC](#), which is the transferable curriculum required.

[MEETING COUNSELORS, REVIEWING THE VIDEO](#)

When can we meet with our counselors? Once you have reviewed the course offering videos, please email your counselor to set up an appointment. We can call you on the phone or set up a zoom. Keep in mind that our workday is your school day, so you may need to leave a class for a short period of time, or meet during break, lunch or tutorial.

Will this recording be posted somewhere in case we want to revisit this info? Yes, indeed. We will post the video and the Q&A on the Counseling Website under the Events section and email it out to all Junior families.