

Tamalpais High School



*Introduction to the
College Application Process*

Junior Night

January 18, 2018

Counseling Office

- **Scott Birkestrand, Counselor**
- **Alexandra Hunt, Department Leader and Counselor**
- **Brian Napolitano, Counselor**
- **Sandra Pula, Counselor**
 - **Jane Zimmerman, Counselor**
- **Melanie Voorsanger, College/Career Specialist**
- **Jane Shapiro, Counseling Secretary**

Take a Deeeeeeep Breath!

- ★ This year and a half is another rite of passage in parenting.
- ★ Your Child is well-prepared for success
- ★ Your child will get into college/find their path
- ★ This is a period of growth for you, your child and your family
- ★ You have counselors as your allies
- ★ Managing Stress – Courses/process
- ★ You are not alone!

Supporting your Student



DO:

- Help them stay on top of their grades
- Ask Questions early
- Help with organizing
- Be Prepared for some bumps (*makeup classes, extra tutoring*)
- Look out for stress
 - ◆ May testing!! -AP Tests, ACT, SAT)
 - ◆ October (Fall) lots of apps due, school still busy
- Make sure kids eat, sleep, be patient when they're moody, etc
- Be open minded/Let them have responsibility for their process
- TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO - your kids are watching you!

DON'T:

- Do it FOR them
- Compare/Get caught up in comparisons

Scheduling Senior Year Classes

- We recommend 5 academic classes
- Balance your Honors and AP classes
- Balance your commitments and activities
- Taking classes at College of Marin
- Working a job
- Doing your application for colleges and scholarships

Types of Admission

- **Regular**

- November 30th, December 15th, January 1st, January 15th, February 1st ...and then some more...

- **Rolling**

- ASAP, often with Priority Filing dates; **best to file early! (Univ.of Colorado, Univ of Oregon, ASU, Univ of Arizona)**

- **Early Action**

- November 1 or 15th: non-binding (“single-choice” EA)

- **Early Decision**

- November 1 or 15th: binding (Some ED II as well with later deadlines)

- **Priority Deadline**

- Used for scholarships – varies by college

College Requirements

- Courses
 - Graduation Requirements
 - “A-G” courses (UC / CSU approved list can be found online)
 - “Challenging course load”
 - Meeting minimum and/or average GPA’s (vary year to year)
- Admissions Tests
 - SAT (with writing for UC)
 - ACT(with writing for UC)
 - SAT Subject Tests
 - Test Optional
- Letter of Recommendation
 - Counselor AND teachers
- Other Activities
 - Activities that show “sustained involvement with increasing levels of responsibility”

Tips & Tricks

Check out the following links for “A-G” lists:

<https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist#/list/details/1330/>

Senior Rank Update

- As a district we do not rank
- Ranking based purely on academic achievement contributes to a stressful and unnecessarily competitive atmosphere.
- Colleges will not have a penalty if we do not rank or provide a decile it is more the norm across the country. Cornell states it best: “The majority (actually, a large majority) of our applicants come from schools that don’t rank students. We review applications by looking at each grade obtained in high school and looking closely at the rigor of the curriculum.”

College Requirements: The Transcript

The transcript gives colleges much insight into the educational journey of the student. It is important to be mindful while crafting these transcripts.

- Most students will meet “A-G” course listings if following a general educational track for graduation.
- Colleges look for students who challenge themselves appropriately.
- AP / Honors Courses
- Sticking with subjects
- Taking a full load

College Requirements: Counselor Letters of Recommendation

- Your counselor will send you the LOR packet and due dates for letters in late spring and/or early fall 2018.
- When you are done email it to your counselor.
- Check your email accounts to get our messages.
- Keep a spreadsheet of schools and requirements.
- RESPECT the timelines.

College Requirements: Teacher Letters of Recommendation

- In the late spring contact the teacher who knows you and your study skills best.
- Ask the teacher what he/she needs you to do to get things together for the letter.
- Teachers may request a resume from you.
- 1 teacher or 2 teachers
- Teachers do not get a copy of the counseling LOR packet.

College Requirements: Other Activities

- College are looking for “sustained involvement in activities with increasing levels of responsibility”.
- Stay involved and challenge your leadership skills.
- Reflect on your experiences.
- A title is not enough!
- Think about the uniqueness of your activities as well as what your activities say about you.
 - Ex. Translating for parents, family obligations

College Requirements: Admissions Testing

- Testing Options
 - [ACT](#) or [SAT](#)
 - Students generally begin testing in Spring of junior year and continue throughout June, preferably needing only one test in Fall of senior year, or no test at all.
- ACT v. [SAT](#)
 - Colleges accept both SAT or ACT interchangeably so the decision of which test should rely on which test the student is more comfortable / performing better with.
- SAT Subject Tests
 - Very few schools require SAT Subject Tests.
 - They are however required for some specific majors like engineering.
 - .
- Test Optional Schools
 - Many schools are making it optional to report test scores. To find a complete list of which schools go to www.fairtest.org.

College Requirements: Admissions Testing Prep

- School work is the best prep for testing.
- Practice tests (books and websites) can help as well.
- Khan Academy ([FREE SAT test prep](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat)) **Linked to College Board!!
<https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat>
- Prep Courses
- Online courses

Test Smart: Tips & Tricks

- How do I do my best?
 - Full-length practice tests!
 - Identify the questions.
- How do I practice for essays?
 - Read op-ed pieces
- How do I afford testing?
 - Apply for fee waivers early!
- How do I afford sending my scores?
 - *Send blind!*
 - *Utilize your free score reports at registration, on testing day, or a few days after testing day.*

Junior Year Checklist

Junior Year is the time to reflect, research, and prepare. If you take your time now understanding yourself, your goals, and your strengths, you will come into Senior Year being prepared to tackle every task ahead.

Spring

- Keep up grades!
- Attend your Junior Conference with counselor
- Attend your assigned Junior College Search Workshop
- Attend Testing Night
- Attend College & Gap Year Fairs
- Attend Career Speaker Series
- Take Tests (ACT / SAT)
- Campus Tours/Virtual Tours
- LOR (Counselor & Teacher)
- Take SAT Subject (if necessary)

Summer (to think about)

- Continue to research/visit colleges for informed decision making
- Essay drafts
- Develop your interests
 - Internship / Summer Program
 - Job
 - Volunteer etc.
- Work on college list

Senior Year Checklist

September / October

- Meet with College Career Specialist (Ms. Voorsanger).
- Submit LOR packets on time
- Attend college representative visits and/or local college events
- Attend Senior night
- Attend Essay Tuesdays and finalize essay drafts in October
- Attend UC / CSU Workshops
- Begin working on UC / CSU applications
- Decide if applying early to a college (if appropriate)
- Apply for EOP, if applicable
- Apply for fee waivers, if applicable
- Attend Financial Aid Night
- Fill out FAFSA

November / December

- Submit UC / CSU application and any early admissions applications
- Finalize Common Application and all other application lists
- Finalize essays
- Search / Apply for scholarships
- Submit FAFSA

January - May

- Submit all outstanding applications.
- Search / Apply for scholarships
- Check portals for outstanding documents.
- Await decisions.
- Commit by May 1.

College Search: Resources

- The CCC: College and Career Center
- Naviance
- Books
- College Board and other online search databases
- Junior Workshops

College Search: The CCC

- CCC Library: Books, pamphlets, applications
- Mandatory Junior Workshops
 - Juniors will be assigned a tutorial date for a mandatory college search workshop where students will start understanding the college process and reflect on what they're looking for.
 - Juniors will not be allowed any individual meetings unless they have had both their junior conference *and* their junior workshop.
- Essay Tuesday
 - Students can bring in drafts for review at lunch during the Fall Semester.
- College Representative Visits
 - From September – November there are multiple colleges coming to visit campus nearly every day providing information that usually cannot be found online.
 - Schedule can be found on Naviance or on the CCC Blog
- Workshops
 - The CCC offers workshops such as College Search, Application Help, Essay Brainstorming, Picking a Major, Early Admissions, and financial aid
 - Schedule can be found on Naviance or on the CCC Blog.
- Career Speaker Series
 - From March – April on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at lunch, professionals of all kinds will be coming into the CCC to discuss their careers and the journeys that brought them there.

College Search: The CCC Blog

- www.thsccc.wordpress.com
- Workshop Notes
- College Visit Notes
- Guides, Tips & Tricks
- Interesting Reads
- Summer Programs
- Jobs
- Community Service
- Scholarships
- CCC Schedule
- Subscribe!

College Search: Naviance

- www.naviance.com
 - For login information, contact CC Counselor for password update.
 - Students – should be district login and student ID number as password
 - Parents – username will be email.
- College Search Tool
- Admissions Statistics Comparison
- College Visits listed
- Personality Assessments
- Scholarship Lists
- The CCC Weekly
 - Weekly email describing upcoming events and including important and useful links.
- Most important feature: “Colleges I’m Thinking About”
 - By adding colleges to this list you automatically get notified when:
 - That college is coming to Tam for an information session.
 - Scholarship or open house information comes in about that college.

College Search: Exploration

- Researching the “Best Fit”
 - The best school is the best school *for you*.
- The Four P’s
 - Place, Program, People & Price
- College Visits
 - Go together!
 - Plan ahead: visit possible choices, not randomly (spring, summer, fall)
 - Tours, information sessions, interviews and visit classes
 - Visit local campuses (you can take virtual, online tours)
- Community Colleges :
 - A.A. Degrees, Certificate Programs, Transfer
- Program to CSU, UC and private schools
- Imagine: Look at possible majors, programs, goals
- Use filters wisely – filter by score to find Safety, Match, Reach schools.
- **Don’t get caught up in branding!**

College Process: The List

- Narrowing down the search
 - Pay close attention to the details that are important *to you*.
 - Try to picture yourself on campus or in class.
- Organize schools based on academics: Safety, Match, Reach
 - Safety: A school in which a student is well above the average admissions statistics.
 - Match: A school in which a student is within range or matching the average admissions statistics.
 - Reach: A school in which a student is well below the average admissions statistics.
- Organize schools based on finances
 - Make sure to have a “financial safety” to the best of your ability in each section of safety, match, or reach.
 - Use the Net Price Calculator
- Be Realistic
- Taking Stock
 - Be open minded and open to all possibilities, not just *Well Known* schools
 - Compare your record: Look at published admission standards & patterns
 - Discuss finances: The sooner the better!
 - *Goal = by the end of the next year, you will have CHOICES! (play with that??)*

College Process: The Essay

- “Writing the College Essay” (www.thsccc.wordpress.com)
- Utilize worksheet and identify core values and characteristics for yourself, *before* looking at prompts.
- Draft ideas over the summer focusing on:
 - Transformation
 - Moments of growth
 - Leadership
 - Meaningful Activities
 - Failure
- Be honest
- Nerd Out!
- Have drafts done before breaks and utilize Essay Tuesdays

College Season Etiquette: How, Not Why!

For adults and students alike:

- Be conscious of casual conversations
 - Ask “How are your applications going?” not “Where are you applying?”
 - Focus on *qualitative* accomplishments rather than *quantitative* ones.
- Do not evaluate colleges as “bad” or “good”.
- Be wary of application “hacks” and rumors.
- Encourage your children to be confident in their lists and celebrate their uniqueness.
- Help us to create a supportive environment for all at Tam High School.
- Refrain from posting college acceptances on social media until decisions have made.
- FEEL FREE TO KEEP YOUR LIST PRIVATE IF YOU WANT TO.

Remember: For most of their lives, students have been able to make major decisions that are similar to those of their peers. For many, this is the first time their decisions will and should look very different.

College Process: Reflection

- Self discovery and reflection
 - Why am I applying to college ?
 - What do I want to get out of college?
 - What special talents and interests will I bring to a new community of learners?
- Reflect on what is important to you
 - Intellectual: competitive, moderate, laid back
 - Social: size, makeup, atmosphere, sports, Greek life
 - Geographic: coastal/Midwestern, close to or far from home; urban/rural; warm, cold, moderate
 - “Prestige” & “Rankings”: according to...?
 - Cost: “List price”, availability of financial aid, merit and need-based scholarships
- Types of program-group/individual
- Lifestyle
- Length of Gap Year
- Finances

College Process: The Work

- Create a separate email address using your name.
 - Update your school contact by emailing Jane Shapiro at jshapiro@tamdistrict.org
 - Check this email frequently.
 - Update your Naviance and Home Access contact as well with this email.
- Clean up your social media.
- Make a master spreadsheet, template online
 - Keep track of all colleges you are interested in as well as important facts about them such as size, location, special programs, application deadline, cost, etc.
 - Use a separate tab in this worksheet to keep track of all usernames and logins (there will be many!)
 - Use another tab to narrow down college list to only those you are applying to.
 - Use another tab to begin listing scholarship information.
- Website Tips
 - Attend a College Search Workshop to learn how to navigate confusing college websites.
 - Know how to find a course catalog, courses offered, or a course requirement map so you can accurately picture what kind of education you will be pursuing. Majors can differ greatly between schools.
 - Know how to find the Financial Aid Office website for information on additional scholarships.

College Process: The Work

- Study
 - Junior and senior year grades are critical
- Contribute to your community beyond requirements.
- Assemble your activities resume
 - Memberships, offices held, honors, awards, summer study, work experience, research, etc.
- Assess your teacher relationships
- Brainstorm the personal essay in the summer
- Get to know your counselor
- Begin to investigate financial aid

College Season Etiquette: Listening and Talking

- **Which mode are you in?** *Passive, Telling or Receptive/Responsive*
- **Talking too much?** *“College” becomes another member of your family*
- **Talking too little?** *“College” becomes the elephant in the living room*
- **Our best advice?** *Set aside time to talk*
- ***De-stress the process by being organized***

Non- College Options: Gap Year

- www.usagapyear.org
- www.thinkingbeyondborders.org (Thinking Beyond Borders)
- www.amigoslink.org (Amigos de las Americas)
- www.leapnow.org (LeapNow): Transforming Education)
- www.nols.edu (National Outdoor Leadership NOLS)
- www.outwardbound.org/gap-year-semester-courses (Outward Bound)
- www.rusticpathways.com/gap (Rustic Pathways)
- www.theleap.co.uk (The Leap)
- www.wheretherebedragons.com/whydragons.who (Where There Be Dragons)

Gap Year: Questions to Ponder

- Are you burned out, frazzled or not enthusiastic about college academics?
- Would you benefit from an experience that allows you to be “truly independent”?
- Are you adventurous?
- Do you have a sense of purpose?
- Will your parents support your decision to defer college for a year?

Gap Year: What is it?

- **Break from “formal” education**
- **Learning continues in a different format and venue**
- **Find your purpose**
- **Re-awaken your love of learning**

Gap Year: Why now?

- US News and World Report- Sept. 2014
- Low graduation rates
- Declaring a major
- Pressure

Gap Year: What do colleges think?

- Many colleges support a “structured” experience.
- Encourages personal growth and maturity
- Arrive at college more engaged and ready for the rigor of the college experience

Local USA Gap Year Fairs

- **Sunday, March 4, 2018, 1:00-3:30 pm**
Jewish Community HS of the Bay, San Francisco, CA
- **Thursday, March 1, 2018, 6:00-8:30 pm**
Sir Francis Drake High School, San Anselmo, CA
- Register at www.usagapyearfairs.org

Free Gap Year Programs

- AmeriCorps
- VISTA
- National Civilian Community Corps
- Habitat for Humanity
- City Year
- Public Allies
- The Corps Network www.corpsnetwork.org
- World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms
- Global Volunteers
- International People's College in Denmark
- Masa Israel

Low cost Gap Year Programs

- www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps
(AmeriCorps)
- www.cityyear.org (City Year)
- www.woofusa.org (WWOOF-USA)

What can you do right now?

- ★ Focus on the present and do your best!!!
- ★ Attend junior conference.
- ★ Attend junior workshop.
- ★ Make a testing plan.
- ★ Get on [Naviance](#).
- ★ Subscribe to the CCC blog.
- ★ Plan college visits.
- ★ Start thinking: What do you want your next 4 years to be?

Upcoming Dates

- **January through March** – Junior Conferences

February 8th – March 24th @ Tutorial (Assigned Date) – Junior Workshops

March 7th – April 6th M/T/Th @ Lunch – Career Speaker Series

- **Tuesdays @ Lunch** – Essay Review

- **February 1st @ 6:30** -- Financial Aid Night

- **February 7st @ 1pm – 4pm** – Practice SAT / ACT

- **May 3rd @ 6pm – 8pm (Dominican)** – WACAC College Fair