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The impact of COVID-19 on our high school juniors and seniors

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Without a doubt, your life has been already been impacted by the spread of the novel coronavirus. Social distancing, self-quarantine, voluntary or mandatory school and business closures clearly show we are not doing 'business as usual' in any shape or form. I have assembled the timeliest information possible so I could offer substantive advice to you. The following information was correct and current as of March 26.

JUNIORS

Standardized Testing: The College Board canceled the SAT scheduled for May 2. All make-up tests dates for March were also canceled. For the most current College Board information go to <https://pages.collegeboard.org/collegeboard-covid-19-updates>

ACT rescheduled its April 4 exam to June 13. Further updates are available at www.act.org/content/act/en/covid-19.html

If you're going to have a long break between the end of your prep and your official test, you need to take one or two practice tests and make time to review content the month leading up to your official test administration.

Summer School Courses: An informal survey of both community colleges and state universities informs us that most institutions are deploying distance learning options for summer classes. Concrete decisions about if and how courses involving hands-on lab work will be conducted are not yet available, with decisions forecasted to come in by May, at the earliest.

Summer Programs: Students who plan to attend a summer program should visit the program's website for the most up-to-date information on program status, availability of refunds, and so on.

2020-21 College Applications: Currently, it appears that most colleges and universities plan to accept applications per their individually designated fall 2020 and winter 2021 schedules (Early Application, Early Decision, Regular Decision application deadlines). These schedules may change, depending on a wide variety of factors well beyond our control now.

College Visits: For now, research your college list, and visit your favorite colleges' websites. Take virtual tours, write to undergraduate admissions representatives and get on college mailing lists; open and

read the mail you receive from your favored colleges, ask intelligent questions not easily answered on the college website, and check the college's LinkedIn page to see if you can connect with current students to learn more about the school. In other words, demonstrate interest in the many ways that do not involve leaving your home.

JUNIORS AND SENIORS

AP Exam Administration: On March 20, College Board announced that traditional AP exams will not be administered; instead, students will take a 45-minute online free-response exam at home. For each AP subject, there will be two exam dates offered so you can choose to take the test when the material is freshest in your mind or take additional time to study. The full exam schedule will be available on April 3.

College Board plans to soon announce portfolio submission deadline extensions for AP 2-D Art and Design, 3-D Art and Design, Computer Science Principles, Drawing, Research and Seminar courses. Check their website often for updates that are important to your academic standing.

SENIORS

Transcripts: Due to high school closures through at least May 1 some students may find it difficult to obtain transcripts in a timely manner and it appears most colleges and universities will be accepting late documents on a case-by-case basis.

Registration/Orientation: Given the volatility of the current situation, colleges and universities nationwide are reluctant to say much about how business will be conducted regarding the 2020-21 school year. The most reasonable course of action is to adhere to each school's most current guidelines, submitting all deposits and housing requests in a timely manner. As the pandemic unfolds and its trajectory becomes clearer, schools will undoubtedly reevaluate and adjust deadlines and other policies as necessary. Visit the websites of the schools you plan to send applications for updates.

College Selection: Many seniors must select the school they will attend in the fall without the benefit of revisiting the campus or, in some cases, without having visited at all. This is a very difficult topic to address because one size does not fit all, and I am painfully aware of the fact that this is one of the most important decisions of your life. If you are torn between two or more schools, try the virtual visits and other tips I offered above for juniors; also review the

list of factors that were most important to you when you first constructed your college list to help you to decide what college might be the best fit for you now.

May 1 National Decision Deadline: As the coronavirus disrupts the admissions process, a growing number of institutions are giving students more time to decide. But others are holding fast to May 1. Check your colleges' websites for more information. Once you make your decision, monitor incoming emails from the school for the most up-to-date information.

Independent Education Consultants: For the most part, we educational consultants are working and available by phone, Skype, Zoom and FaceTime. Reach out to us with your questions or concerns.

As we go through these challenging times, I firmly believe we will emerge stronger and better as a country and as individuals. The good news is that technology has made it so much easier to stay in touch. You are not alone. Be strong, be safe and stay well.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write elizabeth@doingcollege.com; Visit www.doingcollege.com; or Call: 925.385.0562.

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