

Published December 9th, 2020

## Questions seniors should be asking amidst COVID surges

By Elizabeth LaScala



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](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com); Visit [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com); or Call: 925.385.0562. your financial aid forms, call and ask about how to proceed with an appeal to review changed circumstances.

College admission and financial aid offices are generally very responsive to inquiries during the pandemic. After all, they are not on the road wooing students to apply and thus are more available for questions from families. Contact them and ask all your questions and express all your concerns; and if a college is not forthcoming, I suggest crossing it off your list.

Now more than ever, a college education is an essential first step toward a fulfilling career. I am an expert at college matching and have made it my business to stay up to date and informed on the dramatic and ever-changing impact COVID is having on higher education. Staying current and compassionate are critical to providing my students and their families with the information they need for wise decision-making. I encourage you to contact me now for a courtesy consultation, so I can help you understand your options.

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

Although news of an effective vaccine for COVID is surely a godsend, getting it distributed and into the arms of our U.S. population will take some doing. Thus, high school seniors still face some uncertainties about what colleges will look like in the fall of 2021.

For seniors who applied during the early application cycle, December will bring admission news and by spring regular decision results will be pouring in. As your shortened college list begins to take shape, doing some dedicated research into how colleges are handling the pandemic is advisable. Issues related to financial aid and return on investment are paramount. Here is a short list of questions to ask and things to consider that may stimulate other questions of importance to your family.

The technology to switch to remote learning was easier for some colleges than for others. How seamless was the transition and did the college charge technology fees for the delivery of online courses? (See "Assessing Online Learning - before, during and after COVID-19" at [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) for four questions you should be asking.)

Will schools be less generous with financial aid packages than in prior years?

Did the college lose faculty? We know many senior professors retired due to the pandemic. How will the loss of prestigious faculty affect your return on investment?

How will colleges assess your financial need? The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) assesses financial need and pulls a family's financial information from two tax years prior. For complete information about FAFSA visit <https://finaid.org/>. Most importantly for high school seniors, students planning to attend college in fall 2021, your financial need will be assessed based on your family's 2019 tax returns. Your financial situation may look a lot different in 2020 than it did in 2019. A job loss or serious illness may have caused a change in your family's ability to afford college. After you have sent in

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