

March 2016

5th – New SAT Reasoning Exam

Underclassmen—Make plans for a productive summer. Investigate summer programs, jobs, internships and opportunities to visit college campuses

Juniors—Create an initial list of colleges

Prepare for spring SAT/ACT exams

April 2016

9th - ACT and ACT plus Writing

(register by 3/4- late registration 3/18)

Seniors should have their final letters of acceptance by the beginning of April

Juniors—Visit colleges

Prepare for AP Exams

Seniors—Compare offers of admission; revisit top choices

Evaluate financial aid packages and explore college funding options

Spring-Break College Tours

A high school senior and her parents walked into the dining hall during a college tour and found many students eating alone. That was all they needed to see. While the intellectual rigor of the school appealed to her, this student also wanted a more social environment and decided this wasn't the place for her.

Atmosphere is something you don't get from viewbooks and websites. There's nothing like a campus visit to find out if a particular college is a good fit. And Spring Break is the perfect time to visit colleges because college calendars rarely coincide with those of high schools.

Often, students don't know what they really want until they see a variety of colleges. One student loved the idea of a lush, sprawling campus. But when she visited Connecticut College, with its 700 acres of greenery, woods and water, she thought it was too quiet and decided to look at schools with a livelier, bustling atmosphere.



The more colleges you visit, the better you get at evaluating whether the school is a match. That's why it makes sense to start with local colleges, even if they're not on your list. If you live in Los Angeles, visit UCLA and Occidental to get a sense of how a large public university is different from a small, private college. After visiting a couple of colleges, you'll know what to look for, and will be in a better position to

evaluate what you're seeing.

On college trips, it's tempting to see as many schools as possible. But visiting more than two schools a day becomes a frantic rush from one college to the next, with no time to fully experience each school. Plan on spending at least three hours on campus to allow time for a tour, information session and lunch in the dining hall. If there's time, parents should give their child an hour on his own to imagine himself as a student at the school, while they check out the surrounding community.

While student tour guides are very knowledgeable, they're also boosters of the school. That's why it's important to talk to other students. They have all gone through the college application process in the last few years, and they're usually happy to share their wisdom. Ask what other colleges they applied to and why they chose this one. Has the school met their expectations or disappointed them? What kind of person is a good fit for this college? What do they love about the school and what would they like to change?

You also want to know if students have trouble getting courses they want. How many classes are taught by teaching assistants rather than professors? Get a feel for the intellectual climate by asking what the most popular classes are, how much time students spend studying and what they do on weekends. Check bulletin boards for information about club meetings and internships. Pick up a school newspaper to see what issues are hot on campus as well as what lectures and concerts are scheduled.

For a prospective student, it comes down to a gut reaction. Does she feel excited being on this campus? Can she see herself walking to class, hanging out with these people? If she feels good about herself while she's visiting this college, if she sees people she'd like to get to know, she's that much closer to making a good match.

Career Paths for Peace & Justice Studies Majors

- Teacher/Educator
- Human Resources Director
- Mediator
- NGO Director
- United States Ambassador
- United Nations Employee
- Psychologist/Counselor
- Attorney
- Political Aide/Research Assistant
- Lobbyist
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Social Worker
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- Outreach and Intervention Worker
- Student Organizer
- Victim Advocate
- Executive Director- Non-Profit
- Journalist
- Family Case Manager
- Community Health Worker

For more information go to www.peacejusticestudies.org, the website for the Peace and Justice Studies Association. They have a job board, newsletter, and a global directory of PJS college programs. www.iprafoundation.org is the website for the International Peace Research Association Foundation, which offers grant and fellowship opportunities in peace research projects all over the world.



Majoring in Peace & Justice Studies

Peace and Justice Studies is a truly integrated liberal arts major. Earning a bachelor's degree in this relatively new major (or minor) area of study can enrich nearly any career since this major focuses on conflict resolution, social justice and peace work. Students learn to think critically, work hands-on with groups both locally and internationally, and develop strong written and oral communication skills.

While programs vary at different colleges, students majoring in Peace and Justice Studies can expect to take classes in conflict resolution and the study of peace and justice, along with general education requirements such as political science, sociology, philosophy and history. Students who aspire to work internationally should consider taking an applicable foreign language. Internships and study abroad programs may also be helpful.

There are many different career paths for PJS majors. Many go on to jobs in foreign policy, social and economic justice, environmental activism and protection, law and government. In volunteer and service organizations, they hold important roles in conflict resolution, community organizing, and in assisting underserved populations, such as immigrants and minorities. As NGO (non-governmental organization) Directors, they run non-profits that focus on making positive changes in a specific area. As examples of advocacy-based workplaces, you may find PJS graduates employed by the Peace Corps, Amnesty International and Greenpeace.

PJS graduates also work in the business world. With this background, they make excellent Human Resources Directors. HR Directors are responsible for hiring and firing, as well as mediating conflicts between employees and employers. Some companies hire mediators to help

resolve workplace problems and improve morale and productivity.

Other Peace and Justice Studies majors go on to careers in counseling, social work, psychology, or family therapy to help individuals and families. Those who are interested in education can work as professors at the college level, in public and private elementary and high schools, and in specialized training institutes. Getting a PhD is required for jobs in higher education.

A BA in Peace and Justice Studies is also a good background for entering law school to become an attorney, or for working in politics as an aide or research assistant for a US senator or representative. One of the highest paid jobs suitable for a Peace and Justice Studies graduate is that of an United States Ambassador. Ambassadors work to improve relations between the United States and other countries, and these positions generally require extensive travel. Others may seek a career with the United Nations, although this may require frequent relocation. The UN may offer PJS graduates positions in management, politics and security. Careers in foreign services have excellent opportunities for promotions and salary increases.

Graduates of PJS programs have many options for meaningful careers. This major is best suited for students who are passionate about social justice, conflict resolution, and creating peace. A number of Peace and Justice Studies programs are located in universities that have religious affiliations, which should be taken into consideration when choosing the institution that fits your needs best.

If you feel strongly about being the change you wish to see in the world, this just might be the perfect major for you!

Financial Matters: Sources of Merit Scholarships—part 2



In addition to finding scholarships through the colleges to which you apply, you may want to turn to external organizations that run scholarship programs. Private scholarships are offered by national corporations and associations, as well as by local organizations, clubs, and companies. While there are a *few* highly competitive private scholarship programs that offer very large awards, in general scholarships from private organizations will be smaller, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars.

What's the best way to find private scholarships? Start with local scholarships. Your school counselor or advisor can usually provide a list of scholarships offered by companies and organizations

Ideas for a Productive Summer

How you spend your summers can influence your admission to college. While summer activities will not compensate for mediocre grades and poor test scores, careful planning can tip the scales in your favor. Let's look at the kinds of experiences that can make a difference.

Colleges across the U.S. offer summer programs for high school students. In some cases, students take regular college summer courses for credit alongside college students and participate fully in campus life. Often, the high school students live together in supervised dormitories and participate in special activities and seminars designed for them. You can earn three to eight college credits in programs such as those offered by institutions such as Harvard, Syracuse, Brandeis, Cornell, Brown, Ithaca College, and UC Santa Barbara. Shorter programs offering intense study in just one area, often focused on specific careers, are also

in your local community. Local scholarships usually receive fewer applications so you may have a better chance of winning one of these awards. Next, look for scholarships offered on the state and national levels. Some trade associations, for instance, offer scholarships for students who are planning to study certain majors in preparation for careers in their industry. Other national scholarship programs are geared towards students with specific personal characteristics. There are a number of scholarship search engines on the Internet. A good starting point is the College Board's Big Future Scholarship Search. You can access this database at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-searchA>.

Regardless of whether you plan to apply for individual college scholarships, private scholarships, or both, the best advice is to start your search early. Don't wait until after you have already applied to a college or been admitted to think about scholarships. For example, in order to be considered for scholarships at some colleges, applicants

must apply by a certain date or complete additional application materials. It's also smart to target the scholarship opportunities that most closely align with your personal characteristics, talents and achievements rather than using a scattershot approach. Pay close attention to the application requirements and deadlines for each scholarship. Parents can also help their children develop a scholarship plan and calendar so they can stay on track with scholarship essays and applications. While applying for scholarships can be time-consuming, the effort may pay off with savings for your family.

However, students who apply for external scholarship aid should be aware that the aid is usually given for one year only (though the student may be eligible to reapply). More importantly, be aware that some colleges will reduce their offers of financial aid by the amount of external money the student brings in, thus negating the value of the effort involved.

available. You can learn about Veterinary Medicine at Tufts, study Marine Science at the University of Miami, investigate military careers and engineering at the U.S. Air Force Academy or Naval Academy, work on your portfolio at Skidmore, or engage in scientific research at Boston University. Non-credit enrichment courses that also provide students with the experience of living on campus are offered to high school students at schools like Barnard and Columbia. Attending a college's summer program probably won't influence your admission to that particular college, but your willingness to spend part of your summer vacation in serious learning indicates your level of commitment and thus may affect admissions. Good grades in your summer courses and a glowing letter of recommendation from your instructor are also a plus. You can find the perfect college-based summer program at

www.blayz.com or search the database at www.teenlife.com.

It's not necessary to leave home, however, to craft a productive summer. Interesting or unusual volunteer work can also provide opportunities for personal growth as well as become the focus of a unique essay. Teaching adults to read through a literacy program, giving sailing instruction to disabled youngsters, working with abused children, helping to build a house for a low-income family or teaching computer literacy to the elderly will teach you patience and compassion and allow you to give back to your community. Whatever you choose to do, do more than just hang out. Colleges look to fill their student body with interesting, motivated young adults. By making good use of your summer vacation, you become a more attractive candidate for admission.

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The Waitlist Blues

The relative ease of applying electronically and the increased use of the Common Application have contributed to a large increase in the number of applications to selective colleges. With this rise in qualified applicants, colleges are faced with a dilemma. Fearing that the same students have simply filed many more applications, colleges are reluctant to turn students away, yet still are unable to grant too many acceptances. Therefore, they've resorted to using the waitlist to assure themselves that they can fill all spots in their freshman class. This is good for the college, but what should the waitlisted student do?

As admissions letters arrive, you'll need to begin making some decisions. If you've been lucky enough to have been accepted at your #1 choice, congratulations! If you've acquired a number of acceptances, you'll need to reconsider your options and rank the schools in terms of which fit you best. However, if one or more of those decisions have stranded you on the waitlist, you need to act right away.

If you prefer "Waitlist U" over any of the colleges that have granted you an acceptance, you can opt to stay on the waitlist. You'll want to return the response card (or email) quickly, and follow up with a letter explaining your disappointment and your hopes of ultimate acceptance. If

true, include a statement that you will attend that school if ultimately accepted. Include with your letter any additional supporting documents, such as your newest grade report, any awards or honors you've recently won, even an additional letter of recommendation from a teacher or employer, assuming the college welcomes these. If you are not sure, call admissions and ask. The goal is to provide the school with even more reasons to accept you. Follow your letter with a phone call to the admissions representative who handled your application.

In that call, ask if the waitlist is ranked in any way and how many students are on it. Inquire about the number of students they expect to take from the waitlist or have taken in prior years. Be sure to find out if there is a cutoff date for the waitlist. Nationally, only about 20% of waitlisted students are accepted each year, and at selective colleges the percentage may be much lower. Rather than counting on the waitlist, choose one of the colleges that offered you a place and send them an intent to enroll and deposit before the May 1st deadline. You can withdraw later if you are admitted from the waitlist.

Most colleges accept students from the waitlist who they know are most interested in attending, so if it's your dream school, make sure that "Waitlist U" knows you will attend if admitted.