



College Advising
Summer 2019

10th Grade Packet

Included in this packet:

- Letter from College Advising
- Healthy, Productive Approaches to the College Process for Students and Families Prior to 11th Grade
- Information About PSAT Testing on October 19



Dear 10th grader and family:

Summer 2019

Tenth grade at Seattle Academy is an important time for young people to learn about themselves as students and as people. While we are college advisors, and while we know that college questions really start brewing as students approach 11th grade, we encourage Seattle Academy 10th graders to think more about developing academic and extracurricular pursuits during their second year in high school than about trying to please Anonymous College Admission Office X. (Doing so tends to pay off!) When students make the most of high school, college admission follows naturally and appropriately.

We do not want, however, anyone at Seattle Academy to experience belated and unpleasant surprises related to college admission. Fortunately, our years of experience both in college admission and in college counseling have informed our best practices about how to support students in upper school and in the college process. We would like 10th graders and families to start developing a college awareness that informs them – but does not frighten or “package” them. So, we offer this short College Awareness Alert for 10th graders and families. Keep it in mind, but please try not to let it overwhelm, a 10th grader’s academic or personal individualism.

This year, please try to undertake the following college-related tasks:

- Do your best in your schoolwork and build good relationships with your teachers.
- Read the accompanying handouts, one of which is a Seattle Academy-specific reminder of both productive and counter-productive approaches to the college process.
- Know that in the 10th grade spring, a group of college advisors, teachers, and administrators will provide a helpful overview of the years to come, addressing in particular the myths and realities of the 11th grade year. This evening meeting for parents/guardians in the Theater on Tuesday, March 24 addresses common questions about course selection and testing.
- Take the PSAT at Seattle Academy on Saturday, October 19, more details of which accompany this communication. 10th graders will experience a low/no-stakes practice in October with Seattle Academy as home base. This year, do not study for what is a practice test...for a practice test. In 11th grade, the PSAT test serves as the National Merit competition qualifying exam and is another good practice for a regular SAT administration in the winter or spring of 11th grade. PSAT scores are typically available around winter break.
- Save your work, building a portfolio of sorts by saving writing, lab reports, and creative work on your computer.

As 10th graders, you **might** wish to undertake the following college-related projects:

- Attend one college fair such as the Colleges that Change Lives Information Session and College Fair (register at www.ctcl.org) at the Sheraton Seattle on August 1 at 7 p.m.; the National Association of College Admission Counseling National College Fair (www.nacacfairs.org at which students can also register) on November 1-2 at the Convention Center, and the PNACAC Fair in the spring (date TBA) at Seattle University’s Connolly Center. Generally, participating colleges for this last fair are listed on www.pnacac.org shortly before the event.
- Attend Seattle Academy’s annual Guide to College Financing on September 11 at 7 PM in the Theater, open to all upper school families.
- Attend a talk on Thursday, October 10 at 7 PM in the Theater by Matt Steiner, Senior Director at Compass Education Group, who will present to 9-11th grade families on the role of testing in the college admission process, effective strategies for exam planning and preparation, and the varied landscape of testing policies (e.g. test-optional, score choice, so called “superscoring,” Subject Tests, etc.). Matt has worked in the testing industry for over twelve years and currently teaches graduate level lectures for the UCLA, UC San Diego, and UC Irvine college counseling certificate programs. In their public speaking, Matt endeavors to demystify standardized testing and dispel anxiety about the topic. Matt’s schedule necessitated the timing of this presentation, which we know is in a week with a unique schedule. Fear

not if you cannot make it; we will send out a summary of Matt's talk afterward and plan to invite Matt back in the future.

- Visit a local college or two, just to start getting a feel for various college cultures. A visit to the University of Washington gives a student a taste of college at any large public research institution while the University of Puget Sound exposes students to life at a typical selective national liberal arts college. If you're not yet interested in visiting colleges, it's fine to wait until junior year.

Also, we add here briefly a preview of information available later this summer. While Seattle Academy does not have an Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum and most Seattle Academy students don't take nor need to take Advanced Placement exams, a handful do each year. Generally these students are 11th or 12th graders often applying to universities abroad. Nonetheless, College Board is changing the registration procedure for AP tests. For the few students affected by this, when available we will share related information with the class and post it both in Naviance and on the SAAS 10th grade webpage.

Years of experience, both in college counseling and in college admission itself, and cutting-edge research about college search timing appropriate to adolescent development, inform the most appropriate time to kick-off "official" college counseling. While informal college conversations occur before 11th grade, students (and their eventual college searches) benefit greatly in the interim from the focus on academic and co-curricular pursuits (and not on the college search itself). Students need the raw material gained during these years, less the distraction of the college search. In the meantime, in addition to the information on the College Advising page of the SAAS website, please feel free to email additional, general questions to the member of our staff dedicated to ninth and tenth grade questions, Taylor Kanemori, at tkanemori@seattleacademy.org.

College Advising very much looks forward to working with you in the future! Best wishes for the year ahead!

Melanie Reed, Dave Thomas, Misa Kabashima, Stacie Cone, and Taylor Kanemori
Seattle Academy College Advising



HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE APPROACHES TO THE COLLEGE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES PRIOR TO 11TH GRADE

We're still "deep" in our first year or two of upper school. What can we do now?

- Know that every student (and every family member) is on a **continuum** in the college search... as in life. When the time comes, Seattle Academy will not let you or your student fall behind. A proven record of college advising history, structure, and success informs your student's process.
- Support your student in a **consistent and/or improving academic close to 10th grade** and an equally supportive beginning to 11th grade. What goes on the transcript comes first, before the "college searching."
- Urge students to **save writing** and record interests and activities for a later extra-curricular **résumé**.
- Know that your student's **authentic academic and personal individualism** (academic and co-curricular résumés, so to speak) represents best to colleges, not an overly "planned" and "groomed" package of Something that Looks and Sounds Like the Student but Isn't the Student. Summer activities, for example, need not be expensive and need not be out of the country. The experiences should engage student participants/volunteers, and give them a jumping off point for further (perhaps local?) service.
- Attend **college advising events** (everything from subsequent parent nights to talks on college financing).
- **Read** *College Admission, from Application to Acceptance, Step by Step* by Robin Mamlet and Christine VanDeVelde.
- **Read** *Colleges that Change Lives* and *Looking Beyond the Ivy League* by Loren Pope.
- Families occasionally have questions about spring break or summer **college tours**. These visits can, and should, remain informal at this point, not exhaustive tours of all small Northeast liberal arts colleges. Consider doing a "drive by" of a college at your vacation destination. If your student knows they want to see a particular college, that's great! Plan a trip. If they have no idea, that's fine, too. If your first college visits occur next spring, or even after your student is admitted to a few of his/her colleges, you are not behind.
- As a family, choose to address the newness and seeming ambiguity of an otherwise extremely exciting (and at Seattle Academy, extremely well organized and successful) process in ways that **model great coping and problem-solving skills** for students.
- Please **ask first** before securing outside resources for college support other than test prep. Outside college counseling is uncommon and asking if it's necessary can cut down on confusion for the student and duplication of resources in general.
- REMEMBER – you have already started the college search process by attending Seattle Academy.

What happens between now and 11th grade?

- **Students focus mostly on being students.** We can't stress this enough: This deserves and needs more attention than the college search now and in the future. This will pay off in the college search.
- Approximately 150 **colleges and universities visit** Seattle Academy annually. 11th graders may attend (we'll explain as the time approaches).
- Students attend various **college fairs**, including the Colleges that Change Lives Tour/Fair, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) National College Fair, and the NACAC Performing and Visual Arts Fair.
- Seattle Academy and its peer schools host an **invite-only independent school college fair** exclusively and intentionally for 11th and 12th graders and their families with well over 100 selective college attendees.
- 10th and 11th graders **take or retake the PSAT**, the outcome of which guides us and families toward possible test prep.
- College Advisors **answer common questions** of 11th graders at meetings in October and lay the foundation for their individual work with families.
- College Advisors **answer questions anytime** they arise (all the while ensuring the application process for current applicants gets significant attention... believe us, you'll be glad for all the attention when your students submit their applications). Taylor Kanemori welcomes general college-related questions from ninth and tenth grade families at tkanemori@seattleacademy.org.
- Just before winter break, College Advising transitions from filing applications with the current 12th grade to working intensely with the 11th grade with **College Kick-Off Events** for 11th graders and their families. These events introduce students and their families to SAAS' web-based college counseling program and arranging individual meetings to address the college search at the most developmentally and academically appropriate, healthy, and advantageous time.

What should we not do now?

- Push your student toward college faster than necessary by discussing college ad nauseam. Even if you're thinking, "C'mon, I know my 10th grader is as interested in this as I am!" --- too much, too early, can backfire. For all kids, burnout on activities is real (college "searching" among them). Seattle Academy draws on years of experience to time its process intentionally to maximize the high school period in which kids are developmentally, emotionally, mentally, and strategically suited for the task.
- Don't get fixed on any one "thing" --- any one type, location, or selectivity of school. We will insist the eventual college list is (strategically) varied.
- Recognize that the genuine (not manufactured) academic and personal record is paramount, obvious, and attractive to colleges.
- Allow the media, the next door neighbor, or the for-profit college "industry" make you crazy or make you feel like you should have done fourteen things already. College Advising is here to tell you when you need to do the first of the fourteen!



To: 10th and 11th grade students and parents
From: Melanie Reed, Dave Thomas, Misa Kabashima and Jaymie Lewis
Date: Summer 2019
RE: PSAT Testing and Schedule for Saturday, October 19, 2019

Greetings from Seattle Academy! We write with news of the forthcoming PSAT for 10th and 11th graders. For nationwide PSAT administrations in 2019, College Board has made two dates available, only one of which (the Saturday administration on October 19) is workable for Seattle Academy to preserve as much in-class time as possible.

As a result, all of Seattle Academy's 10th and 11th graders will take the PSAT at school **on Saturday, October 19. We assume each of our 10th and 11th graders will test and we automatically register each student for the exam.** As with all PSATs, College Board does not provide an alternative or "make-up" date for students.*

10th and 11th graders should arrive outside the Gym at the usual time (8:15 AM) on Saturday, October 19, and expect to be involved in testing and test-related activities for about three and a half hours. **Each student should bring his/her usual Seattle Academy-required calculator and two sharpened pencils to use in the exam.** Teachers and administrators will proctor the exam administration according to College Board guidelines. Jaymie Lewis will reach out individually with additional information for students who will test with accommodations that day.

When available, College Advising will alert 10th and 11th graders via email to practice tests available in the College Advising office. College Advising will also ensure 10th and 11th graders receive additional information about the exam. The College Board partnership with Khan Academy also has free prep resources available for the revised SAT/PSAT at <http://tinyurl.com/onkf8sj>. If students fill out their materials correctly on testing day, College Board plans to email them score access information during the winter. In the past this information from College Board has been available before winter break.

The PSAT is important to 10th and 11th graders in different ways. **For 10th graders**, the PSAT is an opportunity to practice standardized test-taking under official College Board testing conditions. **For 11th graders**, the test serves another purpose: it is the route through which some enter the National Merit Scholarship Program, an annual process by which especially high testers may qualify for some college undergraduate scholarships. If an 11th grader scores high on this PSAT, they qualify as a National Merit Semifinalist or Commended Student, two designations for college-bound students. (The strong student who has an off-day in the PSAT and does not qualify need not worry; the test works in positive ways but not negative ones for college admissions.)

We strongly recommend all 11th graders determine which of the SAT or ACT is the test on which they plan to focus, either by taking one of each in the winter or spring of 11th grade (followed by a retest on whichever they prefer) or by taking a diagnostic exam through a test prep provider. Students for whom this presents a financial challenge will talk about strategies for this starting in December with their college advisor. Dates for both exams are available on the College Board and ACT websites. **We will also discuss these topic at evening meetings in October.**

For all 10th and 11th grade families, please be sure that your child has a good night's sleep and a nourishing breakfast before the October 19th test. If a student brings snacks or water with her/him to the test, we will ask that the student place the food and beverage away from the test to avoid spilling on their test (exceptions are made for students with known medical conditions). Per College Board regulations, students will not be allowed to leave the premises to get snacks during the test. As we said above, students with diagnostic evaluations that recommend accommodations on standardized tests may be eligible for PSAT test accommodations. If your student is eligible, you will hear separate details from Jaymie Lewis in Learning Support.

* **Very occasionally, if a student has a significant conflict with the PSAT date, they have done the following:** called directly other schools in Seattle to see if any of them are offering the test on Wednesday, October 16, *the only other date option authorized by the College Board*. Only after checking with Seattle Academy teachers to determine whether the student can miss Wednesday the 16th (grades being more advantageous than a practice standardized test, the scores of which colleges don't see) is the student allowed to test at an alternative location. This is up to the student/family to arrange. If this is the case for your student, please notify Melanie Reed at mreed@seattleacademy.org, Dave Thomas at dthomas@seattleacademy.org, or Misa Kabashima at mkabashima@seattleacademy.org after you or your student made arrangements with another school *and with Seattle Academy teachers* so College Advising knows your student will not test at Seattle Academy on October 16. Thank you!