

Breck College Counseling News November 2019

Breck Parents,

Many early applications have been submitted and there are still a few more to be submitted by the Nov 1st deadline. It's difficult to believe the amount of activity, growth, and change that has taken place since August; imagine where your child will be in a few months!

Though many of our seniors are in the midst of the application process, there is a rising reality that the college process is here for juniors and that sophomores are to soon enter the "college" discussion. Now may be a good time to check in with your child about their feelings and thoughts on the matter as these stressors can add to the rigors of the Breck work and responsibilities.

For younger students, it's never too early to think about how you'll plan to use your summer! Students should begin thinking about unique opportunities or further ways to pursue a passion, interest or hobby.

Seniors

Early Decision and Early Action deadlines are upon us. This is a busy time for everyone – students, parents, teachers, the College Counseling Office – and there are moving parts. Please take some time read the following, which we trust will provide some clarity.

Early Decision Agreements for Common Application colleges are to be completed online. Most colleges require the ED Agreement form to be signed by the student, parent and college counselor. If you have not yet done this for your ED school, please check the procedure for your school. Our advice is to check your institution's net price calculator to get an estimate of what your family will be expected to pay before committing Early Decision. You should do your homework PRIOR to signing the ED agreement form. If there is an issue regarding the calculator estimate, please speak with a counselor.

Financial Aid requirements and processes will vary by institution and by application process. Each institution will set its financial aid process and it's imperative you follow these guidelines and deadlines closely. Early Decision schools often require submission of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile or an institutional aid form around the same time as the application deadline.

Ensure that your applications reach their destinations. The following steps can help relieve the stress of this tension-filled process.

1. **Submit applications in a timely manner** – the more in advance of the deadline, the better. This will give the admissions office staff time to process them.
2. **Keep a copy of everything.** Hang on to notes or emails from admissions offices, personal identification numbers and passwords and even cancelled checks. It never hurts to have full documentation of your actions and interactions, especially if a problem crops up later. For the Common Application, as you review your PDF and submit, save the PDF to your laptop for record-keeping purposes.
3. **Keep your name consistent.** Choose one name and stick with it. If you include your middle name on one document, you must remember to use it on all other forms. If you have a nickname, decide whether you will apply using that name or your given name. Either way, don't switch once you've chosen because the likelihood of mix-ups and missing pieces will undoubtedly increase if you do.
4. **Get the facts.** Even if part of your application really is missing, the situation is often easily remedied. Take a deep breath. Check with Ms. Papillon to verify what was sent.

5. **Communicate with your counselor and Ms. Papillon.** Make sure your counselor is aware of any changes to your college list and when you are applying to each college.

Colleges may report application materials as missing even though you (and we) have submitted them.

There are several reasons this may happen. **Missing Document Correspondence** can be prevalent after students submit their applications. Whereas the student's portion of the application often seamlessly transfers into college databases, the school documents must be downloaded by the institution and matched with the file. We follow the dates of submission on your blue sheet (which may also be found in Naviance) for submission. Ms. Papillon submits all available school documents by this stated deadline. Should you need to change the date of submission or application type, let Ms. Papillon know.

1. Do not call colleges to check the status of your application. Most colleges will provide you with some way to track your application status online.
2. Many colleges report more than half of their applications are submitted on the deadline day. This means all of your materials may be received in the admissions office, but may yet to be processed. The process of uploading all your materials - matching your application, test scores and recommendation letters - and updating the student status as complete on the college website may take several days.
3. Some admissions offices will send an automated message stating your application is incomplete. These messages are often sent even though all application materials have yet to be processed.
4. You may have elected to use a different application method than what was listed on your blue sheet. The method you use to submit your application affects how the college office must submit the rest of your application paperwork.
5. Inconsistent personal information submitted. If your name is Susan M Mustang, you completed your application using Susie Mustang, and you registered for the SAT under the name of S M Mustang, the admissions office may not be able to match all of the parts of your application. Please note the college office uses the name as it appears on your transcript. That is your official name in our records.

While you're waiting for an early application response, finalize your college list and complete other applications. Complete and hold on to your applications to other schools. Let teachers know if there are new deadlines. If you wait until after you've heard from an early, you'll have to rush to complete your other applications while you're in the midst of finals, holiday preparations, etc.

Order SAT and ACT score reports online. Allow 4 weeks for scores to be delivered to college admissions offices. You are responsible for sending test scores to each college. None of the documents the College Counseling Office submits includes your test scores.

The College Counseling Office will provide mid-semester grades to colleges who request them. If you would like your grades to be sent, let your counselor know! Mid-Year Grades will be available in mid-January and will automatically be sent to your colleges.

Remember that there is no such thing as a senior slump. Schools watch your grades carefully and all decisions are granted upon successful completion of your senior year. Note that it's not enough to finish, you must successfully finish. There is a difference.

Coffee with the Counselors, Tuesday, November 8, 8:00 AM at the Heritage room in the Anderson Ice Arena. The discussion topic will be The Process Moving Forward.

The final due date for handing in your Transcript Request Form (including additions/deletions to your college list) is December 1. All blue sheets are due into our office by December 1. Keep in mind that large state universities have priority deadlines, and be sure that you are reading application instructions and due dates carefully, allowing our office enough time to get your information processed and submitted.

Please note: College counselors and teachers are on break beginning Monday, December 23 through Friday, January 3. They will be back on campus Monday, January 6. We will do our best to be available, but plan in advance so everyone can have a break!

Juniors

We had outstanding attendance at our October practice tests! These tests occur at a busy time and yet our juniors showed up and performed well. You will receive your PSAT test scores by early December. Look for communication from us in a few weeks.

You may want to revisit your testing plan with your college counselor as you register to take your next standardized test. Below are registration deadlines. Please note, Breck is no longer a test site for the March SAT as it is the first Saturday of spring break.

SAT	
Test date	Deadline
March 14	February 14
May 2	April 3
June 6 (at Breck)	May 8

ACT	
Test date	Deadline
February 8 (at Breck)	January 10
April 4	March 28
June 13 (at Breck)	May 8
July 18	June 19

MEA Weekend proved to be a successful time for students and parents to visit a college campus or two. We provided a guide for those visiting colleges, offering suggestions on questions to ask, things to look for, and how to process each visit. This is not the only time to visit and it's a bit too early to start narrowing down the college list to a select few, but it is a good time to start learning about colleges and universities.

Course Planning takes place once again January and February. Over break, we encourage parents and students to discuss academic areas of interests, goals for the upcoming semester and beyond, and pursuits outside of the classroom. Remember, colleges determine what is important to you by assessing how you spend your time. Take an inventory of what you do, what you'd like to do, and how you may expand your scope of involvements or the depth of those to which you are currently committed. Preliminary discussions now can prove helpful as students begin to plan their upcoming schedules.

Grade 11 College Night, January 9, 6:30 PM in the Chapel. All juniors and parents are expected to attend! This evening we will cover what you need to know for the second semester and how the process should unfold.

Mark your calendars for April 1! One of our premier programs – the Application Case Studies Program – will run from 6:30 – 8:30. We will host senior level admissions leaders from coast to coast who will guide juniors and their parents through an admissions committee experience.

Sophomores

Sophomores took the Practice ACT on October 12 and the Practice SAT on October 16; the results will be distributed at our **January 29 College Evening**. A large majority of students will naturally see their scores rise in future tests as their curriculum grows to meet the concepts tested on the exam. When we review the results, we will offer students ideas on how to use them to their advantage.

The practice tests also raise another question from families and students: **standardized testing accommodations**. If your child receives accommodations at Breck and is interested in pursuing

accommodations for the PSAT/SAT/AP tests, you will hear from Claire Blanchette following the January program. Receiving accommodations at Breck does not guarantee a student's likelihood of receiving similar accommodations on standardized testing; however, some students may not realize that accommodations they receive are put in place to "level the playing field." It is good to have had conversations with your child to make sure they fully understand the merits of accommodations. Students apply for **ACT accommodations** when they register for the test.

College counselor assignments will be mailed in December. The assignments are designed to give each counselor a representative slice of the sophomore class. We work as a team, bringing our collective knowledge, abilities and connections to the tables for the entire class. Sophomores will work with their counselor in January and February to discuss their junior and senior year curricula and begin conversations regarding testing. Other topics will include items such as co-curricular involvement and summer plans.

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With winter quickly approaching, it can be difficult to think about the summer. However, now is a good time to begin thinking about **how you want to spend your summer**. It is important to note that how a student spends his/her time reflects his/her interests. We will begin these conversations in January and February.

Mark your calendars for January 29! We will run concurrent panels on navigating the athletic process, financing a college education and other timely discussions. More information will follow.

Freshmen

Freshmen took the PSAT 9 on October 16. This was intended to be a trial run for future testing and not predictive in determining future test results. We will distribute scores and test books at the January program noted below. If you are unable to attend, we will give the materials to Mr. Ohm following the event.

The focus now should be on checking in with your child to see if they have hit their stride and how they feel their pace is going. With Final exams approaching in mid-December, clubs underway, the fall sports season concluding, and winter seasons beginning, it can be a good time to take a step back and reflect, talk and prepare for the sprint to winter break.

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