



## Fall Quarterly Update

### For 2019-2020 Seniors

*Our Fall Quarterly Update for seniors is focused on college applications – we’ve used our “Applying to College” section to answer many of the questions we get from students and families during this application season and to link you to additional resources on those topics. Check it out!*

#### Making School Count

- **Maintain momentum!** Eric Jefferson, Admissions Counselor at Marymount University, offers [5 Ways to Avoid “Senioritis”](#) during your last year of high school.
- **Maintain your GPA.** Most colleges count your first semester GPA in their admissions and financial aid decisions. Learn more about how [senior year grades factor into college admissions](#).

#### Looking Ahead to College

- **SAT and ACT options this fall.** You have several opportunities to take or retake the SAT or ACT before most college application deadlines. Here are the [SAT test dates](#) and the [ACT test dates](#). Register for the SAT on the [College Board website](#) and for the ACT on the [ACT website](#).
- **Call Sage College Prep Services for professional tutoring! Sage offers prep classes for both the SAT and the ACT.** Visit the Sage website for details on our [test preparation courses](#).

#### Careers & Majors

- **Declaring a major on your college application.** Your decision on whether to declare a major and which major to declare may depend on the college. In some cases, your decision will have little impact on your admissions. In other cases, your stated major will matter more, especially if you are looking at highly subscribed programs such as engineering, some science and some business majors. Make sure you understand the implications of declaring your major for each application. Read more about [declaring a major](#) and learn about the [pros and cons of applying to college as an undecided major](#).

#### Finding Colleges for You

- **Narrow down your application list.** Experts advise applying to 4-8 schools, making sure to include both more and less selective schools on your list. Learn more about [how to finalize your college list](#).
- **Five mistakes to avoid when creating your college list.** Your college applications represent an important investment of time and energy now and for your future! Make sure to [avoid these five mistakes](#) when creating your college list.
- **Attend a college fair.** College fairs are an efficient way to explore colleges and talk informally with admissions representatives. [National College Fairs in the Pacific Northwest](#) are offered in late October and early November this year (scroll down to find Fall college fairs in Washington and Oregon). The [Portland National College Fair](#) will be held October 27-28, [Seattle’s National College Fair](#) will be held on November 1-2, and [Spokane’s National College Fair](#) will be held November 5. All are free to the public.

- **Pacific Northwest College Fair.** The Pacific Northwest College Fair featuring regional colleges along with military and other post-secondary training options will be in high schools across the Tri-Cities during the week of **October 21-26** (see our calendar for a list of school fairs).
- **Are you on track to get in?** As you create your final list of colleges, use the College Board's [Academic Tracker](#) to see if you are on track to meet the admissions requirements for each school on your list.

### Applying to College

- **Khan Academy: Applying to College.** Khan Academy's valuable tutorials [walk you through the college application process](#), from [deciding when to apply](#) (early vs. regular decision), to [completing the Common Application](#), [writing your essays](#), and [requesting letters of recommendation](#).
- **Get organized!** Initiate your application process by creating a complete inventory of requirements and deadlines. This will help you prioritize, schedule, and leverage your efforts across multiple applications. You may need to initiate the application for each school before you can see all its requirements. Go ahead and get started, and save your login credentials so that you can complete each application later.
- **Finalize your college resume.** Initiate the application process by [composing your college admissions resume](#), which will compile much of the information you will use to complete your applications. This will save you time and ensure accuracy and consistency across your applications. It will also provide a valuable reference for people who are providing letters of recommendation.
- **Request recommendations early.** Don't wait to request letters of recommendation! Here is a [complete guide for requesting recommendations](#).
- **Common vs. college-specific applications.** Colleges fall into one of two categories when it comes to application format: they either use a shared platform, such as the [Common Application](#), [Coalition Application](#), or an alternative (typically state-specific) portal; or, they use their own college-specific application. For example, the University of Washington uses the Coalition Application, while Washington State University has its own application. Colleges that use a shared application platform will likely have a college-specific supplement with additional questions or essays – your application will not be complete until you submit these additional responses.
- **Completing your activities list.** Most colleges ask you to provide very brief descriptions of your extracurricular activities. Care should be taken with this portion of your application on a level similar to your essay. Here are some tips for [writing about your extracurricular activities](#). Note that the Common Application and Coalition Application have tightly constrained formats for documenting your activities – be prepared to use the space wisely and don't save this portion of your application for the last minute!
- **Early decision/early action admission decisions.** Colleges may offer up to three admissions decision plans: (1) early action or early decision; (2) rolling decision; or, (3) regular decision. Understanding your options is important, particular if you are considering early decision or early action. Khan Academy [explains the decision options here](#). For additional information, see this article on [early action v early restricted action v early decision](#).
- **Managing your deadlines.** Plan to submit your completed applications at least one week before the deadline and preferably sooner. Local outages can frustrate your last-minute plans and, on the other end, systems for receiving applications can crash in the final 24 hours as many students rush to submit. Last-minute submittals may also not allow time for the system to alert you to an incomplete application.

- **Ten college application mistakes to avoid.** US News & World Report highlights [10 biggest application pet peeves](#) from college application professions around the country.
- **Manage your test scores.** The College Board (for SAT) and ACT organizations send test scores on your behalf directly to colleges, but you are responsible for making that request. Learn more about getting and managing your [SAT scores](#) and [ACT scores](#).

### Paying for College

- **FAFSA Opens October 1!** [Completing the FAFSA](#) is required to qualify for federal aid, and most colleges and scholarships require the FAFSA before they can offer private financial aid. U.S. News explains the [benefits of applying early](#), and the [FAFSA Help website](#) offers information to help you get prepared.
- **Have the cost conversation.** If you haven't yet had a family conversation about paying for college, make sure you do so before finalizing your college list and completing your applications. *Consumer Reports* lists 10 questions for [the college money talk](#).

### Mark Your Calendar!

- **October 2, 2019, 6:00pm – College, Financial Aid, & Scholarship Application Process Night.** Hanford counselors will walk you through the college application process and provide valuable information to help guide you through the application steps. This event is designed for juniors and seniors, but is open to all Hanford families. Meet in the Hanford Auditorium.
- **October 16, 2019, 6:00pm – Finding your perfect college.** *Sage College Prep Services* is partnering with Gesa Credit Union to present the second of a 4-part seminar series on college planning. The next two seminars will be on **November 6** (Assembling a Successful College Application) and **December 4** (Paying for College). The seminars are free and open to the community, but space is limited – [use this link to register](#), scroll to the Sage seminar, click the registration button and sign up.
- **October 22-26, 2019 Northwest Region College & Career Expo.** Representatives from multiple colleges, the military, and other post-secondary careers will be available for informal conversations with students and families at high schools throughout the Tri-Cities on this schedule: Chiawana (10/21 8am-2pm and 6-8pm), Kennewick (10/22 7:30am-2:30pm), Richland (10/22, 6-8pm), Southridge (10/23 in the morning), Hanford (10/23, 6-8pm), Kamiakin (10/24, 8am-1:30pm), Pasco (10/24, 5-7pm), and Delta (10/25 in the morning), culminating in a final College Fair on Saturday, October 26, 12-3pm at Chiawana.
  - **October 27-28, 2019 – Portland National College Fair.** [Portland's National College Fair](#) offers a free weekend option for those who can't attend the fair in Spokane on November 5. Click the link to find the list of colleges attending.
  - **October 30, 2019, 6-8pm – Planning for College, Part 1.** Cathy McMeeken, McMeeken College Consulting, will present livestream on "7 Top Myths in College Admission" and Rich Quadrel, Sage College Prep Services, will present on "Six Key Strategies to Achieve Your Best Score on the SAT or ACT." The session is sponsored by Angie Furubotten-LaRosee, Avea Financial Planning, in

partnership with Kennewick Community Education, and will be held at Kamiakin High School, Room 440. [Register here](#).

- **November 1, 2019 – End of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter for most area schools.** This is a good time for students to check their grades, and consider whether they need to make changes in order to meet their GPA targets.
- **November 1-2, 2019 – Seattle National College Fair.** [Seattle's National College Fair](#) offers another free weekend option to visit with college representatives from around the country.
- **November 5, 2019 – Spokane National College Fair.** The [Spokane National College Fair](#) is close, free, and open to the public!
- **November 6, 2019, 6-8pm – Planning for College, Part 2.** Barak Rosenbloom, Essay Mentors, will present livestream on “Discover 7 Secrets for a Great College Essay” and Rich Quadrel, Sage College Prep Services, will present on “Paying for College: 5 Steps to Take Control.” The session is sponsored by Angie Furubotten-LaRosee, Avea Financial Planning, in partnership with Kennewick Community Education, and will be held at Kamiakin High School, Room 440. [Register here](#).



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