

**October
2020**

Coming soon...

**Junior Class Virtual
College Tour,
October 20**

Though many campuses are still closed due to COVID, several virtual tours are available. To replace the canceled spring trip to Richmond, the Class of 2022 will have a virtual college visit morning with College Counseling on Tuesday, October 20. Students will miss fourth and fifth periods but will attend sixth period classes.

**Freshmen Virtual
College Tour
November 9**

Freshmen will meet with College Counseling and explore Wake Forest University virtually. More details to come.

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St. David's School

Collegebeat...

An Update from the College Counseling Office

PSAT Day - Wednesday, October 14

Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors...

On October 14 all students in grades 9-11 will take the PSAT exam. **Freshmen, sophomores and juniors will need to arrive in the Middle School gym at 7:30 a.m.** Testing will start *promptly* at **8:00 a.m.** Students will eat lunch at the regular scheduled time and attend first period. Students should be in dress code.

Please bring the following items to school with you for the test:

- A mask to wear during the duration of the test
- Four-function, scientific, graphing calculator
- Two #2 wooden pencils (mechanical pencils are not permitted)
- Watch - turn off alarms and beeps, please!
- Email address
- Sweatshirt or jacket in case the gym is cold

****Note: snacks are not permitted during testing****

Students who receive extended time on tests in the classroom will need to confirm with Mrs. Bennett (tbennett@sdsd.org) that they receive extended time on the PSAT. Extended Time students will test in St. Timothy's 102.

PSAT Score Reports will be returned early next semester. Please contact the College Counseling Office if you have any questions prior to test administration.

Seniors - Interview Workshop at 10:30 a.m. on October 14

On October 14, seniors are required to attend an interactive interviewing skills workshop to be conducted by Mr. McCluthey in the PAC beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Students should arrive to the PAC by 10:20 a.m. as Mr. McCluthey will begin the workshop promptly. The workshop will conclude at 11:45 a.m. Seniors will then walk to the football field for a class picture. Lunch will be provided by the senior mom committee at noon in the lower parking lot. Seniors will report to first period as normal.

Scholarship Highlight

The Jack Kent Cook Foundation's Scholarship Program is an undergraduate scholarship program available to high achieving high school seniors with financial need who seek to attend and graduate from the nation's best four-year colleges and universities. In addition to the monetary award, Cooke scholars receive comprehensive educational advising, significant cohort-based programming, and graduate school funding, as well as access to a thriving network of more than 2,600 fellow Cooke scholars and alumni.

The Cooke Foundation Scholarship Program application (available through the Common App) closes October 30, 2020.

What Are We Looking for in an Applicant?

By Jeff Schiffman, Director of Admission,

So... what are you looking for in an applicant?

A common question, but in my many years in this profession, it's always been the hardest one for me to answer. I've said this before many times in this blog; we never want for our applicants, especially in the Corona era, to participate in specific activities, write about essay topics or in general just do specific things because they think it's what colleges "want to see." There is almost nothing, literally, in this entire process that every university you are applying to is searching for in your application. Each of us have different institutional priorities and university missions and communities we aspire to create. I've also even written an entire blog about [the mania](#) that colleges have created among high school students. Sorry again about that whole thing.

Now, with that caveat in place, there are character traits that can authentically shine through your application that hint at what type of college student you'll be when you arrive on our campus in the fall. I took some time to survey the admission team here to see what personal attributes we enjoy seeing in your applications. Sometimes, they show up in your letters of recommendation and other times, they shine in an extracurricular activity you enjoy. And I'll say it again — these are not checkbox items that we search for in your application. Rather, they might help us to see if you'll fit in here and make a positive impact on the Tulane and New Orleans communities. None of these character traits are things that you can force upon yourself, but perhaps they are things that you can aspire to have. They'll make your college life more fulfilled and will allow you to add a great deal to your personal wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of the community you join in the fall.

I surveyed the team here, and here's what we came up with. This might be one of the longer posts on this blog, but it was one of my favorite ones to write. We appreciate seeing applicants who demonstrate that they...

Are self-aware: You don't have any control over the family you were born into or the community you grew up in... but you can be *aware* of it. I won't shy away from the P-word: Privilege. In reading applications, I try to get a sense if the applicant is aware of their privilege, if they come from it. When I read applicants who have travelled the world for service trips and done internships with doctors and hedge funds (nothing wrong with this doing these things), I also want to see that the student is aware that participating in these kinds of things is only possible for a small percentage of people on this planet. The topics of privilege and self-awareness come up a lot in my blog: you'll see it in one of my [essay writing tips](#) blog as well as in the [COVID-19 section blog](#). I also talk about it in detail on [this webinar](#) at 21 minutes. When you've completed your application, take a look back over it and read it with a few questions in mind: if I come from a place of privilege, am I aware of it? Am I using it for good? And, am I presenting my application in a way that shows a sense of self-awareness and that I can put my experiences into perspective?

Have an interest in hanging with people outside their traditional social circles. I am going to pick on Long Island for a moment. *WAIT* don't get mad yet, 516-ers: I positively love Long Island. My grandparents have lived in Great Neck for almost 50 years, my dad grew up on LI and I have spent hundreds of amazing trips, personally and professionally, enjoying all the glory that Long Island has to offer. That said, I find that Long Island is so great that sometimes students from that region go to college elsewhere, but never "leave" Long Island — they seek out friends who are from the same area high schools they came from and share many of their same identities, backgrounds and beliefs. On the flip side, a lot of Long Islanders come to Tulane and create best friendships with kids from Texas and Mississippi and China and Los Angeles. I want students like that — who are not going to stay in the same bubble they were in in high school. You have four years in college where you establish relationships with anyone you choose. Do it, even if it's not the easiest thing or most comfortable thing to do. We learn the most when we learn from people who are different from ourselves. Don't miss the opportunity to create lasting friendships in college with people from different ethnicities, hometowns, socioeconomic backgrounds and, dare I say it, political beliefs.

Are authentically themselves. This one comes from my colleague [Angel Carter](#): "A lot of times, students go through this process and try to tell us what they think we want to hear and 10 times out of 10... we don't need to hear it! We want to hear from *you* about *your* stories and *your* experiences, not what you think is the most impressive or the most flashy. A tip that I always give, specifically for essays, is write your essay and tell your stories as if you were telling your family or best friend. As weird as that may sound, think about it like this: when we tell our family and/or best friends about our experiences, it's probably the most authentic that we are in telling that story. That's what I want to see in an applicant: you are giving us a sense of who you are and your originality." Amen, Angel!

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Have connected with teachers, young children or others from different generations. Thanks to [Valerie Calenda](#) for this one: "I love learning about students who have developed a strong bond with someone from a different generation in their school community or broader community. Bonds with peers are typical, but connecting with someone who is in a different stage of their life requires an open-mind and develops empathy. I once read about a student who regularly conversed with the custodian at their high school. While sharing about these bonds from a first-hand perspective is great, hearing about them in school counselor's letters of recommendation provides an additional perspective on the inter-generational connection." When you get to college, lots of your interactions here are going to be intergenerational. We want to see you are interested in forging these kinds of relationships.

Are intrinsically motivated. This one's from [Owen Knight](#): "Tulane students work hard in school because they legitimately like to learn. They aren't afraid to geek out about Neuroscience or their upcoming internship. Tulane students are pretty much all capable of getting a 4.0, but they won't ruin their life to do so. They aren't cutthroat and don't care what YOU got on the exam. They'd rather study together to make sure they are all prepared. They work hard in school because... why wouldn't you?" A.k.a., as we said in summer camp, it's OK to leave your "cool hat" at home. I want you to be the student who gets excited about the non-credit field trip your professor offers and rallies other students to go with you.

Are not afraid to say they do not know or they are still learning. [Rula Thabata](#) provided this excellent one. "Oftentimes the college application process can leave students feeling like they need to be perfect, and we're human and it's okay not to be. Sometimes we do not know things as humans and it's okay! For example, struggling in one class and doing better later on in your high school career is something we'll always be impressed by." I agree. I sometimes read essays where it's framed that the applicant has everything nicely wrapped up and totally figured out at 17 years old and all of life's struggles have sun-setted. I've mentioned this in my [previous blog](#) about your college essay. We don't expect you to have this whole thing figured out yet. No 17-year-old does!

Are genuine and not necessarily well-rounded. Here's [Sam Reich's](#) suggestion. "When reading applications, I see hundreds of students who have resumes a mile long. They spend 20 hours a week volunteering, they're student body president and treasurer of the theatre club, they spend every summer building homes with Habitat for Humanity, they play six instruments, AND they have a part time job at the local pizza joint on the weekends. There's nothing wrong with being the Renaissance person, but it can sometimes make it hard to know what the applicant is genuinely interested in. Last year, I read an application of a student who had taught herself three different languages and spent time after school tutoring in one of those languages. She didn't have a list of activities a mile long but she clearly spent her time outside of school doing something she really enjoyed. And guess what? She was admitted to Tulane. I could tell that language was her passion and seeing that dedication to one particular area allowed me to learn so much more about her than if she had 16 different activities on her application. All that to say, find your thing. And don't be afraid to stick to it."

Are balanced. [Kristin Guidry](#) offered this one: "I do not mean balanced in the 'well-rounded' sense; rather, I am looking for an applicant that has the ability to manage their time between academics, activities and social interests. One of the biggest challenges first year students face, at any institution, is the ability to balance the academic rigor of college with the abundance of interest clubs and social activities. I had an applicant share with me a couple years ago that when he got to high school he was invited to join a car restoration club at his school and he became completely engrossed in flipping and restoring cars, so much so that his academics began to suffer because he wasn't adequately managing the academic expectations of his school with his social activities. He further shared that he worked with his guidance counselor to map out a plan for each semester in order to balance his academic workload with his interests and that now planning and balance is just part of his daily routine. I have stayed in touch with him and he mentioned that he was able to help his roommate balance his interests during their first year! Applicants who can show that they have balance as part of their 'tool kit' in their application interest me. It also tells me that they will have a successful first year on campus." Tulane is going to throw A LOT at you if you come here and it isn't always easy to balance it all — and that's OK! We've got amazing [success coaches](#) that will help you find that perfect balance at Tulane.

Are curious: [Henry Marrion](#) is bringing us home with this last trait: "Curious people are the ones who will make the most of their Tulane experience. They'll be most willing to explore the wonderful city that Tulane is located in, and they'll make for more interesting and involved citizens on campus." I think this one is perfect for Tulane applicants. It takes a specific type of kid to want to go to college in New Orleans. Those who thrive here are the ones who are the most curious to discover all the incredible things this town's got to offer. Now, with all that said, do not take this as the gospel. And certainly don't go chatting up your school's custodian just cuz you want a teacher to see you and write about it (talk about inauthentic...). But do use this as some light guidance for what we aspire our undergraduate population to be comprised of. Some of these things might come naturally to you and if they do, we'll get a sense of it without you even having to try, just by reading your application. But lastly... don't overthink this. Don't worry if you don't feel like any of the above come naturally to you. Be yourself and concern yourself less with what you think we are "looking for." Because at the end of the day, we're looking for you... to be you.

College Visits to St. David's School

High Point University , High Point, NC	Monday, October 5	12:05	PAC
Wake Forest University , Winston-Salem, NC	Monday, October 5	12:40	PAC
SCAD , Savannah, GA	Tuesday, October 6	12:05	WCCR
Randolph Macon College , Ashland, VA	Wednesday, October 7	12:05	PAC
East Carolina University , Greenville, NC	Wednesday, October 7	12:40	PAC
Vanderbilt University , Nashville, TN	Friday, October 9	12:05	PAC
Loyola University Maryland , Baltimore, MD	Friday, October 9	12:40	PAC
Baylor University , Waco, TX	Monday, October 12	12:05	WCCR
Moravian College , Bethlehem, PA	Monday, October 12	12:40	WCCR
Clemson University , Clemson, SC	Tuesday, October 13	12:05	PAC
University of Georgia , Athens, GA	Tuesday, October 13	12:40	PAC
RIT , Rochester, NY	Thursday, October 15	12:05	WCCR
Sewanee , Sewanee, TN	Friday, October 16	12:05	PAC
NC State University , Raleigh, NC	Friday, October 16	12:40	PAC
UNC Greensboro , Greensboro, NC	Tuesday, October 20	12:05	WCCR
University of Tennessee , Knoxville, TN	Tuesday, October 20	12:40	WCCR
George Washington University , Washington DC	Wednesday, October 21	12:05	PAC
Virginia Tech , Blacksburg, VA	Wednesday, October 21	12:40	PAC
Davidson College , Davidson, NC	Thursday, October 22	12:05	PAC
Appalachian State University , Boone, NC	Friday, October 23	12:05	PAC
Washington and Lee University , Lexington, VA	Friday, October 23	12:40	PAC
UNC Chapel Hill , Chapel Hill, NC	Monday, October 26	12:05	PAC
Catholic University , Washington DC	Monday, October 26	12:40	WCCR
Roanoke College , Roanoke, VA	Tuesday, October 27	12:05	WCCR
Guilford College , Greensboro, NC	Wednesday, October 28	12:05	WCCR
Belmont University , Nashville, TN	Wednesday, October 28	12:40	WCCR
William and Mary , Williamsburg, VA	Thursday, October 29	12:05	WCCR
Merrimack College , North Andover, MA	Friday, October 30	12:05	WCCR
Georgia Tech , Atlanta, GA	Friday, October 30	12:40	PAC



ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL

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