

Riley Baker Educational Consulting

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October 2020

10th & 11th grade students -
Check with your school for date
they expect to administer the
PSAT

Attend virtual college fairs and
meetings

Meet with college reps utilizing
virtual visits

12th and 18th—NACAC Virtual
College Fair

Register at virtualcollegefairs.org

Seniors - Continue work on col-
lege applications; complete Early
Decision/Early Action applications

Complete CSS Profile if required
by colleges

FAFSA available October 1st

November 2020

Seniors – File Early Decision/
Early Action applications

Work on remaining college
applications

Check College Board and ACT
websites for testing opportunities
in your area if you still wish to take
an SAT or ACT exam

How Will Colleges Make Decisions This Year?

There have been so many challenges and disruptions to our everyday lives since the COVID pandemic started its deadly march across the world – in-home quarantine, required social distancing, no visits with friends or distant family, no travel. and even a shortage of toilet paper. This article addresses the special circumstances for students who are engaged in their high school academics and extracurricular activities, college-bound juniors and seniors in particular. For this group of young people, it's important to remain optimistic that the crisis will, in fact, bring about a sea change in the world of college admissions, leading to changes for the better in a system that for many with limited resources, simply doesn't work.

Admission officers review applicants' academic records with a focused eye on both 11th grade results and coursework rigor. This is also the time for many students to start their standardized testing and build up a healthy resume of extracurricular activities. But in the spring of 2020, most schools closed, and students were suddenly required to complete their spring semester online, within a system that was unplanned and with teachers unprepared to switch over to an online format. Both parties struggled and for many students, this important academic year was suddenly thrown into chaos. Testing dates were cancelled, AP tests were abbreviated and went online, and many schools chose to switch from traditional grading to Pass/Fail results, thus creating havoc with a student's transcript and grade point average. Sports were cancelled, jobs were lost,

community service options fell apart, summer programs were cancelled, making many college-bound students deeply worried that their dreams of gaining entry to their top colleges/universities might become a distant memory .

It is, however, important to note that colleges were going through the same crises as everyone else. They faced losing all their in-person visitors as well as the students they met as admission officers traveled to visit schools, and they confronted a potential drop in enrollment from both in- and out-of-state students, and international students. This pandemic has demanded that colleges and universities take a completely different direction for the students applying for fall 2021 admission. To alleviate the anxiety of so many, a group of over 300 institutions issued a reassuring statement, letting students know that the negative impact of COVID would not, in any way, be held against them in the admission process. Colleges will now need to do things differently. For this year's seniors, it is likely that there will be a heavier focus on fall junior grades, rather than spring junior grades, and trends up to that time will have a second look. It is also possible that colleges are now investing in new ways of evaluating students – examples might include more informational video interviews, or questions to be answered online or in a short video. Ask your colleges for new options.

It has long been known that grades and rigor of courses are the best predictor of a student's college readiness and subsequent (This article is continued on p. 3)

Career Paths for Business Majors

- Accountant
- Advertising Executive
- Appraiser
- Auditor
- Banker
- Bookkeeper
- Claims Adjuster
- Consultant
- Credit Manager
- Economist
- Educator
- Entrepreneur
- Finance Writer
- Financial Planner
- Foreign Exchange Trader
- Fundraiser
- Government Official
- Hedge Fund Investor
- Insurance Agent/ Broker
- Investment Broker
- Loan Officer
- Mutual Fund Manager
- Non-Profit Administrator
- Property Developer
- Real Estate Developer
- Small Business Owner
- Stock Broker
- Venture Capitalist

An interesting website for prospective business majors is called Poets and Quants.

<https://poetsandquantsforundergrads.com/>

Majoring in Business/Entrepreneurial Studies

Business remains the most popular major on American college campuses, with about a quarter of all bachelor's degrees awarded in this area. Business studies can be divided into specific areas such as accounting, finance, marketing and management. Many business majors, however, are interdisciplinary, drawing upon each of these areas. Entrepreneurial studies is one of the most practical of the business majors; it focuses on the skills needed to set up and run your own small business. (The U.S. Small Business Administration defines a "small business" as one that employs less than 500 people.)

Most new businesses fail within their first five years of operation. For this reason, budding entrepreneurs need to learn how to maximize their chances for success. Learning to write a business plan, discovering ways of funding a business, understanding sales and marketing, getting a handle on business accounting and developing strategies to provide leadership for a team are all much-needed skills. The entrepreneurial studies major must learn to do strategic planning, become grounded in business law and ethics, develop management skills, and understand business communications and networking. This is the major of choice for individuals who want to learn how to recognize and respond to new business opportunities. It's also an excellent choice if you wish to use your energy and creativity to enhance and grow a family-owned business. Successful entrepreneurs need to communicate well and be both well-organized and persuasive. You'll need to convince others that your ideas have merit and that you have a concrete plan to reach your goals. The entrepreneurial studies major is ideal for creative, energetic types who want to chart their own course, and who are comfortable taking risks.

Although courses required for this major vary from college to college, nearly all schools require students to first take a core of general business courses. Clas-

ses in accounting, finance, economics, management and marketing provide a financial and managerial knowledge base. Additional courses in the major generally focus on developing and writing business plans, financing a business, sales and marketing, taxation and new product development. Elective courses look to the individual interests of emerging entrepreneurs, with classes in family business, mergers and acquisitions, franchising, managerial law, organizational effectiveness, solving business problems, and launching a company.

A major difference between entrepreneurial studies at different colleges is the variety of courses available. While the coursework can provide the theoretical and practical information needed to start, operate and manage a small business, the best programs have a strong experiential component, providing students with opportunities to practice what they've learned. Some offer courses such as *Student Venture Experience* and *New Venture Planning* (Rider University) in which students choose a hypothetical business that they are interested in starting, complete a business plan involving market research and marketing strategy, and look at business locations and staffing issues. Rider even encourages students to apply for a \$5,000 grant as seed money to help launch their new business after graduation.

When considering programs, look for faculty who have strong academic credentials coupled with real-world experience as entrepreneurs or as consultants to small businesses. Classes should be project-oriented and provide opportunities to interact with local companies. The availability of internships that allow students to work with real-world issues is invaluable. Look for other program enhancements such as incubator space to launch your own company, business plan competitions, access to experts in the industry, and access to venture capital and seed financing.

Financial Matters: The FAFSA



The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the primary form used by colleges to determine eligibility for need-based aid. In some cases, colleges will not consider an applicant for merit aid unless that student has first submitted a FAFSA. The FAFSA should be filed as soon as possible after October 1st of the student's senior year, and then yearly while attending college.

The FAFSA collects basic information about both the student's and his/her parents' incomes and assets, and uses this information to determine an **ex-**

pected family contribution (EFC). The EFC is the amount that the student and family is expected to contribute towards that individual's college expenses during the next academic year. The difference between the EFC and the **total cost of attendance** at your college of choice is known as **demonstrated need.** Colleges use this information to prepare a customized financial aid package for each admitted student who qualifies for financial aid.

The financial aid package may include both grants and loans, as well as self-help such as work-study opportunities. **Only a few colleges guarantee to meet 100% of established need, so financial aid may not cover all of your expenses at a particular college.**

Complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You'll need your

2019 tax returns and other financial records noted on the site. Families who have filed their 2019 returns can also use the retrieval tool on the site to prepopulate a lot of the tax information.

You'll also want to apply for a Federal Student Aid ID (FSAID) for both the student and a parent so you can both sign your form electronically.

Many families have experienced a significant loss of income/assets in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. Although this information is not included in the FAFSA calculation for members of the class of 2021, college financial aid officers are very aware of this issue for many families. Parents can contact the financial aid office at each college to explain their individual circumstances and should be prepared to send appropriate documentation. This information will be factored into the final financial aid package.

How Will Colleges Make Decisions This Year? (continued from p. 1)

success in college. This means that it is imperative for fall 2021 applicants to work hard in the new world of high school and/or virtual learning. It's likely some test scores may be missing, but if you can safely take standardized tests, do so. Many test-optional colleges are not test-blind; you can find a current list at fairtest.org.

Most students will find that their normal extracurricular activities have ground to a halt. Try your best to select some options you can explore at home – practice your singing, musical skills, art; create interesting videos; take new courses; interview experts in your fields of interest; explore nature in your backyard; build robots or computers; and

create face masks and/or food parcels for donation to a local charity. Find ways of shining while maintaining good self-care, and just do the best you can without putting undue expectations on yourself.

Colleges like to connect with prospective students, but visits both on-campus and at your high school are off the table this fall. However, there are still so many ways to connect – complete virtual tours, attend virtual information sessions and open houses, connect with your admission representative by email and ask your many questions. This fall, with many classes being completed online, it may be harder than ever to connect with your

counselor and teachers for recommendations. Make the effort at the start of your fall semester to do just that – let them get to know you. The fall 2021 [Common Application](#) and [Coalition app](#) are offering a new COVID-19 question to give applicants the chance to share their personal experiences with the pandemic; counselors will also have a new form to share more about the impact on their school. So, don't worry about the things you can't control; work hard, make the best of the situation and connect, connect, connect – with your colleges, your advisors and your teachers. You will be at the forefront of change and that's a pretty exciting place to be.

Making the Most of Virtual Tours (part 1)

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One of the many rites of passage for college-bound high school students is the college tour. Although the COVID pandemic has brought most options for on-campus tours to a grinding halt, this should not prevent high school students from continuing to 'visit' their many colleges of interest in ways that have been second-nature to them for most of their lives – by doing research online. Students can examine far more colleges online than they ever could in person and should take advantage of this time to examine colleges that were not even on their radar. Here are some ways to maximize your online college tour experience:

Take some time for self-reflection: Just as with any other application season, the first step on your college tour is to look inside and consider who you are and what you want from your college experience. This important self-reflection will also help you in completing your applications, making your essays resonate with authenticity and your personal truth.

Go wide and deep: Tour a wide variety of colleges but stay focused on what you want from your campus. Look at a range of private, public, large, small, urban and rural campuses that seem attractive but

then, dive deeply into what they offer and how you might see yourself fitting into their ethos and character. Don't allow yourself to become overwhelmed, be thoughtful as you wander.

Start with the college website: After entering their .edu domain, go to the Admission Office first. Learn more about admission requirements, major offerings, testing updates, and statistics – admit rate, class sizes, and student/faculty ratio as examples. Always sign up for their mailing list. You'll start to receive specific communications that are timely and relevant to you.

Embark on a virtual campus tour: There will be a link on the Admission website to the virtual campus tour. As you watch, have a notebook handy, a blank Google doc open or a form to complete as you 'wander' around the campus.

Sign up for virtual information sessions and open houses: You'll receive invitations to attend online sessions during which you will learn a lot more about what an individual college has to offer. These may include even more specific virtual tour options. As you make notes during your tours, list questions you can send to the admission office afterwards.
(continued next month)