

COLLEGE AND CAREER HANDBOOK

2011-2012



**SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL
COLLEGE & CAREER STAFF**

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College and Career Counseling Objectives

*Create Social Capital
Personalized Services
Data Driven Solutions*

SCHOOL CODE: 050816

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FOUR YEAR PLANS

During your Freshman year you will be required to complete a Four-Year Plan along with a career goal during your Health or Intro to Computers classes. A follow-up individual appointment with the Freshman counselor will then be schedule to fine tune some details according to your needs. The goal for this document is for you and your family to prepare for college or job entry depending on your goals.

Staying organized is essential to success while in high school and after graduation. Because of all the after high school options available and deadline driven processes, we want to outline the necessary steps you need to take to better prepare yourself:

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Take challenging courses given your interest
- Discover and deepen your interest by participating in school's clubs, organizations, athletics, arts, and community service.
- Plan for a meaningful summer experience as early as February. Seek out academic programs, internships, volunteer work, or work.
- Attend the Higher Ed Week Parent Night in September or May to listen to college representatives about their admission requirements and financial aid resources
- Parents are invited to attend the Coffee With the Counselors in October to mingle and learn more about the college admission preparation, high school graduation requirements, and have questions answered

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Continue to pursue challenging courses and with your school involvement
- Take the PSAT in October
- Attend the Higher Ed Week Parent Night in September or May to listen to college representatives about their admission requirements and financial aid resources
- Parents are invited to attend the Coffee With the Counselors in October to mingle and learn more about the college admission preparation, high school graduation requirements, and have questions answered
- Schedule a Sophomore Conference in the Spring semester to update your four year plan
- Take the appropriate AP Exams in May
- Take the appropriate SAT II Subject Tests in June if applicable to your college choice and major. Note: for those students enrolled in accelerated courses in science, history, or foreign language.
- Visit college campuses during the summer if at all possible
- Continue with your meaningfully summer experiences

JUNIOR YEAR

- Continue to pursue challenging courses and with your school involvement
- Schedule a Junior Conference in the Fall to update your four year plan and create a resume of activities
- Take the PSAT in October
- Parents are invited to attend Junior Family Day in December to mingle with counselors to learn more about college counseling process, researching majors/careers, standardized testing, and more.

- Attend Higher Ed Week II in May (designated for Juniors only) to directly speak with college representatives from the UC, CSU, and Private Independent schools and sign up for one of their workshops
- Parents are highly encouraged to attend the Higher Ed Week II Parent Night in May to listen to college representatives about their admission requirements and financial aid resources
- Take the SAT I and/or ACT w/Writing in May and June (taking both tests is highly recommended)
- Register for the SAT II Subject Test if applicable. See your counselor for more information
- Take the appropriate AP Exams in May
- Continue with your meaningful summer experiences
- Schedule college campus tours for the colleges you will be applying if at all possible

SENIOR YEAR

- Continue to pursue challenging courses and your school involvement
- Schedule a Senior Conference in September to update your four year plan, graduation status, and activities resume
- Start gathering letters of recommendations from teachers and school reports from your counselor in September
- Attend the Higher Ed Week I in the Fall (designated for Seniors only) to directly speak with college representatives from the UC, CSU, and Private Independent schools and sign up for one of their workshops
- Parents are highly encouraged to attend the Higher Ed Week I Parent Night in September to listen to college representatives about their admission requirements and financial aid resources
- Retake the SAT I or ACT w/writing to improve your previous test scores
- Submit all your college applications (deadlines vary). UC and CSU are due by Nov. 30.
- Take the SAT II Subject Test by December the latest (check with the colleges you are applying)
- Attend the Senior Family Day to learn more about financial aid, scholarships, obtaining your PIN number (FAFSA), and much more.
- File a preliminary FAFSA application starting in January 1 but before March 23, 2011
- Parents are highly encouraged to attend the Parent Financial Aid Workshops in February
- Complete all financial aid forms by the deadline given by the colleges where you are applying
- Notify counselors of your college admissions acceptances
- Mail in Deposit for the college of your choice by May 1
- Take the appropriate AP Exams in May
- Graduate in June

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

A-G COURSES

All of the UC and CSU colleges along with most of the private schools will require you to have completed the following course sequence before you apply to them. We encourage you and your parents to consult with your high school counselor because there are many exceptions and validation processes in completing these courses.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| A) History and Social Science..... | 2 years |
| 2 years including 1 year of US History or 1 semester of US History
And 1 semester of Civics or American Government | |
| B) English | 4 years |
| English 9, 10, 11, and 12 | |
| C) Math..... | 3 years/4 years recommended |
| Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 | |
| D) Laboratory Science..... | 2 years/3 years recommended |
| Biology and Chemistry | |
| E) Foreign Language..... | 2 years/3 years recommended |
| Spanish 1 and 2 or French 1 and 2 | |
| F) Visual and Performing Arts..... | 1 year required |
| Art, Music, Guitar, Theater or Chorus | |
| G) College Prep Elective..... | 1 year required |
| Check with your Counselor | |

*Note: all of the courses above must be completed with a letter grade of “C” or better

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Most colleges still require either the SAT I or ACT w/writing for admission and some colleges will even require you to have taken SAT II SUBJECT TESTS. The importance of these test scores depends on the policy and selectivity of the campus where you are applying. In general, your scores should be “in range” with the colleges to which are planning to apply. Carefully note which tests are required and it is your responsibility to have official test scores sent to the colleges well in advance of deadlines.

THE ACT

The American College Test is a curriculum based test that has four main sections: English, Math, Reading, and Science reasoning. There is also an optional Writing Test that student must take.

On each section, score range from 1-36 points. The composite score is the average of the four test scores. Register at www.act.org.

THE SAT

This is a logical reasoning test with three sections: Critical Reading, Math, and Writing. Each section is scored on a scale of 200-800 points. The Writing section includes a written essay that has a subscore of 2-12.

For additional information about the content and sample questions, please refer to the College Board's website at www.collegeboard.com

THE SAT II SUBJECTS

These are one-hour assessments covering a wide range of subjects including Math, Literature, US History, biology, Physics, French, Spanish, and more. For many colleges these subject tests are used in conjunction with the SAT or ACT I. Please consult with your counselor for more information about which subjects to take and when. For more information and for a complete list of subjects available visit www.collegeboard.com

TEST PREPARATION

While some preparation for test is advised, the first and least expensive step is to purchase a test prep book that includes full samples of the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Test. By dedicating time on a regular basis to practice tests, you will gain familiarity with the types of questions asked and the time constraints. Thus, you will likely enter tests with less anxiety, and consequently heighten your performance.

Helpful Testing Information:

ACT Website: www.act.org

SAT Website: www.collegeboard.com

School Code Number: 050816

Testing Optional Colleges: www.fairtest.org

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

COMMON APPLICATION

This is endorsed by many private colleges and some public universities. The Common App is weighted no differently than an institution's own application. With the Common App you will fill out one set of forms and write one set of essays. You may then submit the application online to the colleges of your choice. To see which colleges accept this application, visit:

www.commonapp.org

INSTITUTION-SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS

Schools that do not use the Common App will have their own application that is almost always available online.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY (CSU) AND UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (UC) APPLICATIONS

The California State University System (CSU) has 23 campuses and admit students solely on the basis of grades and SAT or ACT scores. They do not require an essay or a teacher's recommendation forms. You may apply to as many campuses within the system as you wish, submitting a separate application and fee to each campuses. They require a minimum 15-unite pattern of A-G courses for admissions as a first time freshman. Each unit is equal to a year of study in a subject area. A grade of "C" or higher is required for each course you use to meet any subject requirement. It's important to remediate any course where you have earned a D or lower. For more information about their application, visit: www.csumentor.edu

The University of California (UC) has nine undergraduate campuses and admit students based on 14 comprehensive review factors. Applicants must self report classes, grades, and test scores as well as submit two essays and extracurricular activities. You must submit one application and official test scores where you wish to be considered along with the required fee. The application will then be sent to the appropriate campuses and because of the selectivity of the UC system a minimum of 3.0 G.P.A is required.

Comprehensive Review Factors

1. Academic grades
2. Scores on the SAT or ACT and SAT II Subject Tests
3. Number of content and performance in A-G courses beyond the minimum required
4. Number of performance in the UC approved honors, AP, and college courses
5. Being in the top 9% of your graduating class
6. Quality of the student's senior year schedule
7. Quality of the student's academic performance relative to educational opportunities available
8. Outstanding performance in one or more academic subject areas
9. Outstanding work in one or more special projects in any academic field of study
10. Marked improvements in academic performance as demonstrated by the G.P.A
11. Special talents, achievement, and awards in a particular field
12. Completion of special projects or community service
13. Academic accomplishments in the light of the student's life experiences
14. Location and resources available of the student's high school and residence

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index.html>

APPLYING TO U.S MILITARY ACADEMIES

For a four-year college degree you may consider one of the five military academies:

- **U.S Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD)**
- **U.S Military Academy (West Point, NY)**
- **U.S Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO)**
- **U.S Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point, NY)**
- **U.S Coastal Guard Academy (New London, CT)**

Students who are interested in pursuing the academies should begin preparing as early as the Sophomore Year. This is not a decision to be made lightly as entrance to one of the academies requires a five star military obligation (post-graduation) as an officer in the respective branch. Some of the benefits include: A first-rate education, full-tuition scholarship, and a unique college experience. Admissions to a service academy are extremely competitive. Students must be in good academic standing with high grades and test scores, and advanced courses. Applicants must also be in good physical condition. **All of the federal service academies, except the Coast Guard, require nomination primarily by a congressman.** Most members of Congress do not accept requests for nomination after October of the senior year. Thus, we encourage students to contact their congressman in the spring of the Junior Year.

TIMELINE FOR MILITARY ACADEMY APPLICATIONS:

Sophomore Year:

- Contact a representative of the Academy to learn about the application requirements

Junior Year

- Research websites
- Contact your congressional representatives and request a nomination to the academy or academies of your choice
- Spring and summer, work on your Physical Aptitude Exam (PAE)
- Spring and summer, take your medical exams
- Spring and summer, visit the academies
- Summer, work on applications

Senior Year

- Submit application(s)
- Complete medical and physical aptitude tests if necessary
- Interview for your congressional nomination

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA)

The NCAA was founded in 1906 to establish rules on athletic eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid. It regulates many sports for men and women. There are three membership divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Colleges are members of specific divisions depending upon the size and scope of their athletic programs, and whether or not they provide athletic scholarships. If you are planning to participate in Division I or II athletics as a college freshman, you must be “certified” by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

As soon as you can in high school, schedule a meeting with your counselor and athletic director to determine the appropriate division for you. You must register with the clearinghouse by completing the registration process found at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net While there is no deadline for registering, you must be certified before you receive an athletic scholarship, practice, or compete at a Division I or II institution.

Early Spring of the Junior year is the ideal time for athletes to contact college coaches. Students should draft an athletic resume and cover letter to college coaches, and create a DVD of current games to demonstrate playing ability.

For further information about recruiting and the NCAA and eligibility, contact:
NCAA Clearinghouse: Customer Service 877-262-1492
www.ncaaclearinghouse.net or www.ncaa.org
www.collegiatedirectories.com