

Senior Kick Off to College



Wednesday, August 29, 2018
Beverly Hills High School
College Center

Agenda

- Mark Mead, Principal
- Casey Rowley, College Counselor
 - College Admission Process
 - Action Items
 - Resources & Upcoming Events
- Erika Schwartz, Youth Elevated
 - The College Essay
 - Time Management

What it means as you enter this process as a family

- Discussions
- Transparency
- Expectations & Boundaries
- Values



**How can you maximize your potential for
successful experiences in college?**

Experiences that land you internships.

**Experiences that have academic strength in
the program you want to study.**

Experiences that support your social needs.

**Experiences that leave you with minimal
college debt.**

Experiences that fulfill you and challenge you.

**Experiences that will allow you to move onto
the next phase of your life successfully.**

When you graduate with your bachelor's degree...what experiences will you have beyond the degree?

Approaching the College Admission Process

College List

“Where are you applying?”

- Academics
 - Rigor
 - Support
 - Diversity
 - Student life
 - Access to mentors
 - Return on investment
-

The College Application Process

Giving yourself the best chance of admission to a university that fulfills and upholds your values.

- College list
 - Prioritize your deadlines
 - Know what is required
 - Essays
 - Other areas to showcase strength
 - Savvy Financial Aid
 - Action items
-

College List

- # to apply to
- Be mindful, give yourself the best chance of admission
- Extensive research on your individual universities
- Update your college list in Naviance

Prioritize Your Deadlines

University of California

- Application open, submit November 1 - November 30

California State University

- Application open October 1, due November 30

Private/Out-of-State

- Dates vary institutionally
 - Check for early, regular, priority deadlines as well

College Admission Testing

- Register and complete exams (if needed)
- Be mindful of testing dates and application due dates
- SAT Subject exams (do you need?)
 - Subject strengths, program recommendations, etc.
- Test-Optional
 - Check published middle 50% test scores to see if it's appropriate to send your scores
 - Check for additional opportunities or requirements to send academic work
 - Check for scholarship/honors program requirements
 - [Fair Test - Test Optional Schools](#)
- [Compass College Admission Testing Guide](#)
- How and when to send your scores

College Admission Testing

University of California

- *If you're applying for admission to the fall term, be sure to take your admissions tests no later than December of your senior year/last year prior to high school graduation — preferably earlier — to ensure that your application receives prompt and full consideration.*
- Send scores to ONE campus and it will be shared with all you apply to
- UC Admissions Subject Recommendations

California State University

- Send scores to ONE campus and it will be shared with all you apply to

Private/Out-of-State

- Check individually with each campus

Test Prep

- [Small-group classes](#)
- [Free SAT Prep - Kahn Academy](#)
- [Free ACT Prep](#)
- [Free mock exams offered at BHHS](#)

Score Release Dates

- [SAT Estimated Score Release Dates](#)
- [ACT Estimated Score Release Dates](#)

Essays & Supplemental Materials

- How many essays
- Letters of recommendation (requesting directly through your Common Application, individual applications)
- Supplemental Materials
- Know what you need specifically for your major (portfolio, audition, etc.)

University of California (*personal insight questions, no LOR*, officially send test scores*)

California State University (*no essay, LOR*)

Other areas to showcase strength

- Activities and Awards Sections
- Additional Comments Section
- Videos and new tools
 - [Zeemee](#)
 - University of Chicago upload 30 second video of yourself
 - Coalition “locker”
 - Connecting [Slideroom](#) to an application if required/when appropriate
 - *Check with your individual colleges and universities or ask your admission counselor*

Connect Universities

- Demonstrated interest
- College Representative Visits
- Knowing who your regional admission counselor is
- Professional, authentic, purposeful, thankful

Assessing College Cost

- Know your Expected Family Contribution
- Utilize Net Price Calculators
- Need-based vs. Merit-based Aid and how competitive
- College Navigator
- Cal Grant, BHHS submits for you unless you opt out
- FAFSA, open October 1
- CSS Profile if needed
- Updating colleges if your financial situation has changed

Action Items

- Keep an up-to-date college list in Naviance “Colleges I’m Applying To”
- Complete Brag Sheet in Naviance
- Request Counselor Letters of Rec and any additional
- Connect with universities at local events and at BHHS

Resources

*Visit us online for extensive dates
and information*

[BHHS College Center](#)

- Naviance
 - College Admission
Representative Visits
 - College Monday Workshops
 - Coffee with the Counselors
 - Visit a university
 - On Campus Test Preparation
 - College Connections Fair in
October
 - October College Day
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Erika Schwartz



Youth Elevated

Erika Schwartz: Tutor, Test Prep Teacher and College Essay Guru



- UC Berkeley
- 10 years of working with college essay students around the world
- Previously worked for Elite Education and College Essay Guy
- Past students have been accepted at various UCs, Stanford, Caltech, Pomona, LMU, Baylor, NYU and Chapman University. Last year's admissions included Princeton, Harvard, UCLA, UC Berkeley and a full ride to Pepperdine
- Enjoys helping students find their true voice, watching Audrey Hepburn movies and swing dancing

What will students be expected to write in their applications?

1. Essays
 - a. UC Essays
 - b. Common Application Essay
 - c. Supplemental Essays
 - d. Short Answers
2. Activities Lists
3. Additional Information Section

Types of College Application Essays

1. UC Essays
 - a. Required to write 4 essays, 350 words max. 8 prompts to choose from
 - b. Can send the same essays to all UCs you apply to
 - c. No supplemental essays
2. Common Application Essay
 - a. For private schools
 - b. One essay, 650 words max
3. Supplemental Essays
 - a. For Private schools. Can require anywhere from 1 to 4 essays. The more rigorous the school, the more essays they usually require
 - b. Can be anywhere from 100-500 words
 - c. Prompt examples: “Why do you want to come here?”, “Tell us about an extracurricular activity”, “Why do you want to major in this?”

Activities Lists

UC Activities List

- 160 characters per slot
 - You'll get to list five slots for each of these five categories (so you'll have 25 slots).
1. Educational Prep Programs
 2. Volunteer & Community Service
 3. Work Experience
 4. Awards & Honors
 5. Extracurricular Activities

Common Application Activities List

- 150 characters per slot
- 10 slots total
- List them in order of importance
- Anything left over goes in Additional Comments (This goes for the UC Act List too!)

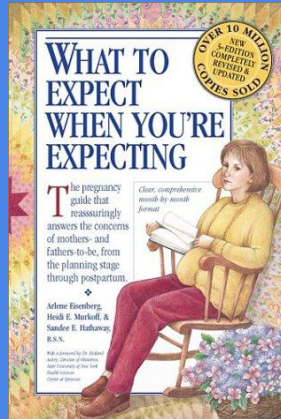
Additional Information Section

Do NOT put another essay here!

1. Any details that wouldn't fit into your Activities List descriptions: bullet points are fine
2. Any test scores (AP or otherwise) that DIDN'T fit into other parts of your application:
3. Serious health issues, learning disabilities, physical/mental issues with you or your family that affected your lives significantly. Also, if your parents were unemployed/underemployed for a significant amount of time:

4. Unusual grading systems or classes at your school. If an Admissions Officer might be confused, it's worth explaining
5. IB Extended Essay Topics, or any other significant work or research you have done.
6. "Red Flags" anywhere on your application, but don't sound like a victim.
7. Anything REALLY COOL that you think would be helpful for the admissions team to know. Show your best stuff!

What to Expect from the College Essay Writing Process



This is going to be a difficult and rewarding process

If you're doing this correctly, this will probably be the most difficult writing you've ever done. It can also be some of the most rewarding, illuminating writing you've ever done. Careful and consistent revision is how to improve your essays.

“Your eloquence should be the servant of the ideas in your head. Your rule might be this: If a sentence, no matter how excellent, does not illuminate your subject in some new and useful way, scratch it out.” — Kurt Vonnegut, author of *Slaughterhouse Five*

Do's and Don'ts of the College Essay

DO:

1. Show your personality and impact
2. Speak honestly and clearly
3. Tell a story that is important to you while being mindful of your reader. Choose a compelling story
4. Draw the reader into your world with details
5. Be aware of the unsaid message you're telling the reader. Avoid topics that make you seem untrustworthy, spoiled, immature and closed-minded
6. Allow yourself the time and space to write, rewrite and create

DON'T

1. Use cliches
2. Discuss in detail events that happened before high school unless it was a serious challenge (death, serious illness, etc)
3. Discuss philosophy, religion or views on anything controversial unless specifically asked
4. Write what you think "the colleges want to hear"
5. Make up an untrue story
6. Try to cram all your writing into a short period of time or write when you're overtired

How do I keep myself organized?

Plan out your writing time

1. Make a weekly writing schedule
2. Follow writing schedule consistently
3. Plan your writing time
4. Write efficiently

Weekly Planner

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5.00-6.00							
6.00-7.00							
7.00-8.00							
8.00-9.00							
9.00-10.00							
10.00-11.00							
11.00-12.00							
12.00-1.00							
1.00-2.00							
2.00-3.00							
3.00-4.00							
4.00-5.00							
5.00-6.00							
6.00-7.00							
7.00-8.00							
8.00-9.00							
9.00-10.00							

Writing plan: Don't leave it until you're "done with your homework"

Steps:

1. Every week, print out a blank weekly time table
2. Block out all known commitments: classes, work, workout, athletic practice, meals, drive time, church, community activities, etc.
3. Block out study time for your classes
4. Block out writing time. At least 1 hour every other day before September. After September, at least one hour a day (including Saturday and Sunday)
 - a. Look for block of time in the middle of other commitments to maximize efficiency.
5. Consistently follow your writing schedule
 - a. Plan your recreational activities around your commitments. Don't change your commitments to accommodate your recreation.
 - b. Training your brain to write is similar to athletic training. You wouldn't work out for just one day and expect long term results. Why would you expect results when you write like that?

How to write efficiently: Get into “flow”

How most people spend an hour of “writing”:

Set up: 2 min

Check Phone: 3 min

Write: 10 min

Get a Snack: 5 min

Watch YouTube: 5 min

Write: 10 min

Bathroom: 5 min

Check Insta: 10 min

Snapchat to friends about how college essays are going: 10 min

How much time did you really spend concentrating on writing?

New Plan for writing: Train yourself to focus and get into flow

1. Rule: during writing time, no distractions. No phone calls, no phone, no texts, no e-mails, no bathroom, no snacks, no friends, no TV, no daydreaming, no video games, etc.

2. Postpone distractions: on a sheet of paper, jot down distractions for during breaks

Writing Training

Week 1: Write for 10 min, 5 min break, write for 10 min, 5 min break...

Week 2: Write for 20 min, 10 min break, write for 20 min, 10 min break...

Week 3: Write for 45 min, 15 min break, write for 45 min, 15 min break...

Week 4: Write for 55 min, 10 min break, write for 55 min, 10 min break...



<---Time Cube from Amazon

Common Questions and Debunking Myths

Why are my essays important? Won't my resume and grades stand out by themselves?

- Many UCs received 100,000 applications
- Readers read hundreds and remember 5 (3 good and 2 bad)
- An opportunity to put a person in front of your resume and grades
- Many students will have your same grades/scores/resume

What do I do to combat writer's block?

- Read through any sample essays you have. Try to think about what qualities and values this writer is showing. Where are they showing it? How are they showing it? Take notes. Pretend you are an admissions counselor and ask yourself “What kind of person are they and what kind of impact did they make?”
- Do writing exercises: Values Exercise, Feelings and Needs Exercise, etc
- Take the Meyer-Briggs Temperament Test. Look at the description on personalitypage.com, under the tab labelled “Growth”. What does “Success” mean to you? How has this shown up in your life?
- If you’re writing about an activity, think of 3 moments that you will remember 5 years from now. Why will you remember them? Freewrite

What if I don't have any "challenges"? Should I make one up? Do I have anything compelling to say?

- Do not make up any stories or say things that you “think the admissions officers want to hear”
- Focus on the qualities and values that you want the admissions officers to know about you
 - What is interesting/cool/quirky/important to understand about you?
 - How can you get the admissions officers to know what it is that YOU bring to the table?

- You don’t need a “challenge” to write a compelling essay. You are compelling as you are, and your story is interesting because it is unique

What if I don't know what I want to study?

- You don't need to know what you want to study to write a compelling essay. You don't have to discuss your future major in your main essays

How can I be sure that I am writing my
“deepest” story? How do I avoid clichés?

- Put your essay aside and come back to it later, with new eyes. Before you read, jot down what you hope the reader will understand about you from your essay. Pretend that it is an essay from someone you have never met. What do you understand about this person?
- How do you know if something is a cliché?
- How do you fix a cliché?
 - Ask yourself: What is honest for me to say?

**I have so many essays to write! How do I
organize myself?**

Write out your prompts and color code your topics. What, after editing, can you use again? Make a plan to help you tackle the essays by prioritizing based on essay size (longer essays first) and due date.

1. Common App Essay (650)

2. Georgia Tech

a. Why Us (150)

b. Being uncomfortable (150)

i. Robotics

2.UCs

a. CA cut down (350)

b. Music (350)

i. Brand new essay

c. Girls who Code/Library classes (350)

i. Brand new essay

d. Robotics (350)

i. Fix the GT/USC Robotics

3. USC

a. Why Us (250)

b. Essential (250)

i. Use a UC

c. Short Ans

4. Harvey Mudd

d. Why Us (500)

i. **WRITE THIS "WHY US" FIRST**

e. Something about you (500)

i. **Copy all of what we have from Robotics. Copy into Harvey Mudd and finalize it for 500, then cut it down for UC (350)**

How many people should read my essays?
Should my parents help me write it?

- Take care to keep the goal in mind (to show your unique story for the purposes of admission) and have objectivity

Q & A

Questions/concerns/requests?

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