

College Counseling Newsletter

B O S T O N U N I V E R S I T Y A C A D E M Y

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**A new College Counseling
Newsletter will be posted
every two weeks**

IMPORTANT DATES

- September 18—Deadline by which juniors and interested sophomores should register for BUA PSAT
- September 22—Deadline by which all seniors must submit a completely finished version of college essay
- September 22—Registration Deadline for October 28 ACT
- October 4—Seniors submit a draft of Common Application and one set of school-specific member questions
- October 5—Registration Deadline for November 4 College Board Tests
- October 7—SAT (for seniors) & Subject Test Date (for any student)
- October 17—Senior Parent Coffee @ 3:00pm at BUA

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COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE VISITS TO BU ACADEMY

Each fall, the College Office hosts between 60 and 80 college representatives. These are admission officers from various colleges and universities who are on campus to meet with interested students. Admission officers typically spend 4 to 8 weeks each fall travelling the country, visiting key high schools in order to get to know students, schools, and college counselors. Given the preponderance of strong secondary schools in the Boston area, it is remarkable how often highly selective colleges continue to visit BUA. Our students make a strong impression on college representatives, strong enough that they are willing to brave the traffic and parking associated with our location year after year!

Generally, college rep visits are intended for our seniors, though juniors are welcome. Our policy is that students may meet with a representative only if s/he does not have an academic commitment at the time of the visit. Senior tend to have many out-of-class hours, so this rarely poses a problem. In the case when a student has class when a rep (with whom they want to meet) is visiting, we ask that the student connect with one of us so that we can advise. We will sometimes try to orchestrate a quick meeting before or after class if possible, but we will most often instruct the student to write a note for—or email to—the college representative.

Meeting college representatives is an important part of

the college search and application processes. It is an opportunity for students to connect with the likely reader of their application, to make a human impression on what might later be an online application the admission officer is reading. It also gives students a chance to ask questions of—and have conversation with—a representative of a college in which they are interested.

Many colleges track “demonstrated interest” in their admission process—that is, the admission officer will view the contact with a student at a high school visit as a demonstration of interest in that college. (However, they understand that attending class is a BUA student’s priority.)

‘NEW’ SAT IN SECOND YEAR

The ‘new’ SAT was unveiled in March 2016. The College Board—while acknowledging that test scores are not the sole predictor of student success in college—developed a test they believe is more reflective of college readiness and success. The new test includes questions more

‘grounded’ in the real world and across a broad range of disciplines. Also, students will encounter texts—such as the U.S. Founding Documents—and the concepts and questions which they have inspired.

The companion PSAT/NMSQT will be offered at BUA on October 14. Details about the

PSAT can be found on the College Board website:

www.collegeboard.org

By now, juniors (who should all take the test), sophomores (who may opt to take the test for practice) and their parents received information about registering for the PSAT at BUA by September 18.

SENIOR PARENT COFFEE

Tuesday, October 17

at 3:00 p.m at BUA

All senior parents are invited to join us for an informal chat over coffee and cookies. We will talk generally about our work with seniors on completing each piece of the college search and application process, how to think about Early Decision or Early Action application options,

ways to support your child through this process (when they sometimes might appear to disregard your advice!), and timely considerations for financial aid.

This is an opportunity to learn more about the fall timeline for the college application process and to ask *group level* questions.

Senior parents are also encouraged to seek us out for

individual family meetings throughout the fall, as needed. We want to work with each family to ensure proper guidance for each individual senior.

Also, if you have not yet completed the parent survey in Naviance from last spring, please take the time to do so (or contact us for information on how to access the survey). Your input is so very helpful to us!

College Rep visits to BUA

Be sure to log in to Naviance (<http://connection.naviance.com/buacademy>) to see an evolving list of college representatives that are visiting BUA this fall

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COLLEGE INTERVIEWS – TIME SENSITIVE

We have shared this many times in the past, but it bears repeating—college interviews are an important and timely piece of the admission process. Some colleges invite students to interview during their senior fall. Others do not offer an interview until AFTER a student applies. Some do not offer interviews at all, while for others, inter-

views are mandatory. Seniors are expected to know the expectations of each college on their list.

Seniors must set up interviews a few weeks prior to the actual interview. Sometimes interviews are with an alumni interviewer or admission officer in the Boston area. If the college is within a few hours drive of Boston, students

should plan to interview on campus.

Some schools interpret a lack of an interview, even if it is “optional,” as a lack of interest in their college.

Seniors are encouraged to schedule a mock interview with one of us soon if they want to practice interviewing skills ahead of time.

FILLING OUT THE COMMON APPLICATION

Almost 700 colleges use the Common Application—an application that students fill out once, but is accepted by many schools.

Last week in senior meeting, we reviewed the creation/ completion of the Common Application. There are some tips and tricks to filling it out. As experienced admission

officers, we understand exactly how admission officers want to see information on the application as well as common mistakes students often make on the forms.

An e-mail was sent to seniors last week with detailed notes from that meeting.

All seniors have been asked to submit a printed version of

their completed Common Application (and one set of college-specific ‘member questions’) to us by October 5th. We will then review these and return to students with feedback for revisions.

Our goal is to make sure students submit the most robust applications they can to their choice colleges.

Fall Test Dates for Seniors

SAT & SAT Subject Tests:

October 7
November 4
December 2

NOTE: November is the only month Language w/Listening Subject Tests are available.

ACT Dates:

October 28
December 9

TESTING TIMELINE

We have a thoughtfully considered timeline for standardized testing we recommend BUA students follow. We do, of course, work with each student individually on a testing timeline that makes sense for them and their strengths.

All juniors should sit for the PSAT in October; it's great preparation for standardized testing, in general. Results from the PSAT are usually available in December. What

students do in the following months will vary based on preferences, personal strengths, PSAT performance, college requirements and other factors.

Juniors should take the SAT for the first time in March or the ACT in April; students who take the SAT or ACT earlier than junior spring generally do not fare as well. Having an SAT or ACT score (or both) by the end of junior

year allows us to thoughtfully advise a student on a test plan while allowing the student time to re-test, as needed, in the senior fall. Many students do take a second SAT or ACT, but students should not take a test (ACT, SAT or Subject Test) more than 2-3 times.

Subject Tests should generally be taken at the end of the year in which the student takes the corresponding class. We recommend that students have at least two by the end of their junior year.

FINDING BALANCE

Junior year is exciting; students are finally academically engaged in the University component of our program. This leaves them with some unscheduled time during the day. And they are beginning to take on some leadership positions in Academy clubs and sports.

At the same time, they are seeing increased work loads, additional responsibilities at home, and having to work harder to ensure time with

their friends and family.

One of the common struggles of junior year is figuring out how to balance all of these things. Students are pulled in many directions, and it is easy to overlook an assignment, a friendship, or an activity. In Junior Meeting, the class has already been discussing the value of mapping out a schedule.

Students are encouraged to

keep close track of when assignments and major projects are due, when tests/exams will be held, when clubs/groups in which they are involved have important events, and when they plan on working on homework for each class. This may help students envision how they spend time a bit better, leading to better balance and commitment to everything he or she is doing.

When to visit colleges

Now that it's your child's junior year, you're beginning to think about the college process—including college visits.

We generally advise Spring Break as a great time to begin college visits in earnest. Your child will continue to evolve, so the closer s/he waits to college enrollment to visit, the more in tune they'll be with their goals.

Many families visit colleges during the summer between junior and senior years, and those visits can bleed into the fall of senior year.

Students may not be able to visit all the schools they are considering. We will work with students to develop college lists in February, and that can be a springboard for planning college road trip.

PSAT

All juniors should sit for the PSAT on October 14. For juniors, the test is the qualifier for the National Merit Competition. Students who plan to take the PSAT at BUA should register by bringing a check for \$20, payable to **BU Academy** to Mrs. Barr by September 18.

BUA's testing will be held in BU's Morse Auditorium (602 Commonwealth Avenue), start-

ing promptly at 8am. The test should conclude around 11:45. The PSAT is aligned to the re-designed SAT that debuted in March 2016. It tests on three major content areas: Reading, Writing/Language, and Math. It does not include a written essay.

Sitting for the PSAT is a useful way to prepare for the SAT—it exposes students to test day

conditions (i.e., taking a test in a timed situation). Students receive a detailed score report in December, designed to help students figure out which concepts they need to focus on to earn stronger SAT scores.

Even if a student decides to take the ACT as opposed to the SAT, the PSAT can be great exposure to and preparation for future standardized testing.

Spring Testing Possibilities for Juniors

March 10
SAT
(No Subject Tests offered in March)

April 14, June 9, OR July 14
ACT

May 5 OR June 2
SAT
SAT Subject Tests

SOPHOMORE PARENTS

We encourage parents to periodically check in with their child about school work. Sophomore year is, for many of our students, a step up from the already high expectations of freshman year. To that end, students are learning ways to effectively manage their time, complete assignments in a timely fashion, and tackle tougher, more challenging concepts.

Some students struggle with the heavier workload, and advanced expectations. While we do our best to help students appropriately manage the workload, we encourage you to be proactive about checking in with your child—ask about deadlines, nightly homework, and what they are enjoying about their classes. Through these conversations, you may glean a better sense of study habits that are or are not working for your child, and how your child manages assignments. As we prepare students for University coursework in junior year, we strive to reinforce efficient and effective study skills.

OPTIONAL PSAT –
REGISTER YOUR
CHILD BY
SEPTEMBER 18

Sophomores are welcome to take the PSAT on October 14. While all juniors are expected to sit for the test, it is *optional* for sophomores. Each year, about half of the sophomore class opts to take the test. PSAT scores are never seen by colleges, and sophomores are not eligible to qualify for the National Merit competition, so taking the test is “low-risk.” Sophomores generally find that taking the PSAT helps them develop a better understanding of the type of college admissions testing they will encounter later on the SAT, Subject Tests and/or ACT. (See page 3 for our recommended testing timeline for BUA students.)

PSAT scores will be available through the College Counseling Office in early December, and we will meet with sophomores in small groups to discuss the score reports. Sophomores and their parents were mailed a letter earlier this month with details about PSAT registration.

STUDY SKILLS & CLASS UNITY

By now, your child probably feels that s/he has a handle on the expectations of our teachers, and the work is beginning to be more demanding.

This is an important time for first-year students to assess study habits and determine what is—and is not—working. Our teachers expect students to perform at a level that matches their potential, and to put forth their best effort.

Four times each week, freshmen and sophomores have Academic Block—a dedicated time to sit in a BUA space, work on homework, or seek out teachers for guidance. Most/all teachers are scheduled to be available then but most also have free time throughout the day, when a student should feel comfortable seeking them out for help. Srdjan Divac and Pat Larash offer students

FRESHMAN PARENTS

support through the Math Center and Writing Center, respectively.

In addition, peer tutoring supports are available for most Academy classes. Peer tutors are upper-class students who have aptitude in a certain subject and are trained in tutoring younger students. Most Academy teachers post assignments on Blackboard, and students are encouraged to keep track of deadlines and long-term assignments. Questions? Be sure to contact Rosemary White, Assistant Head for Academics and Student Affairs.

The Academy is a rigorous independent school. As such, our faculty spends considerable time preparing students for the rigors of University coursework a few years ahead of students at other schools. From our experience, we see that the students who are most successful in the University coursework are those who are able to build strong time management skills, make a habit of checking in

with teachers regularly, and work to complete all assignments in a timely and thorough fashion.

But we’re also a fun community and hope that your child enjoys his/her time at Camp Burgess (Sept. 27-29) and their days at the Academy every day. Camp Burgess is a great “break” from school work, and a chance for our younger classes to connect and bond.

Though we’re just a few weeks into the semester, it’s fun to see the camaraderie of the freshman class, how happy the class seems, and how much our faculty enjoys working with them. There seems to be a good amount of class unity and cohesion so far. We hope that your child is enjoying his/her time at the Academy and is making time for friendships and activities, even while school work might be accelerating.

Perhaps we will see some of you on Parents Day later this fall or at other all-school events. We look forward to working with you in the years to come.